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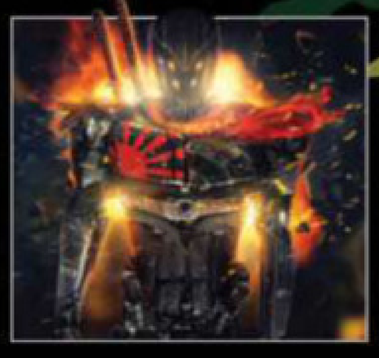
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In this issue's feature, we talk to industry experts about what makes a stunning portrait image. Discover pro tips and insider secrets for retouching, photomanipulation and digital painting, as photographers and artists reveal their favourite tools and techniques in Photoshop. This issue is also packed full of creative tutorials, including how to create a mech robot using stock photos, how to explore colour with blend modes, how to combine photos and illustrations, and lots more. And as if that wasn't enough, we take a look inside animation company Wönky Films as well as interview Lois van Baarle on her impressive portfolio. Also, don't miss the new readers' challenge on p10 – upload your entry for a chance to win a Canon printer. Plus there are more than 400 free resources on this issue's FileSilo, so download them and start creating today!

Sarah Bankes

Sarah Bankes **Editor**
sarah.bankes@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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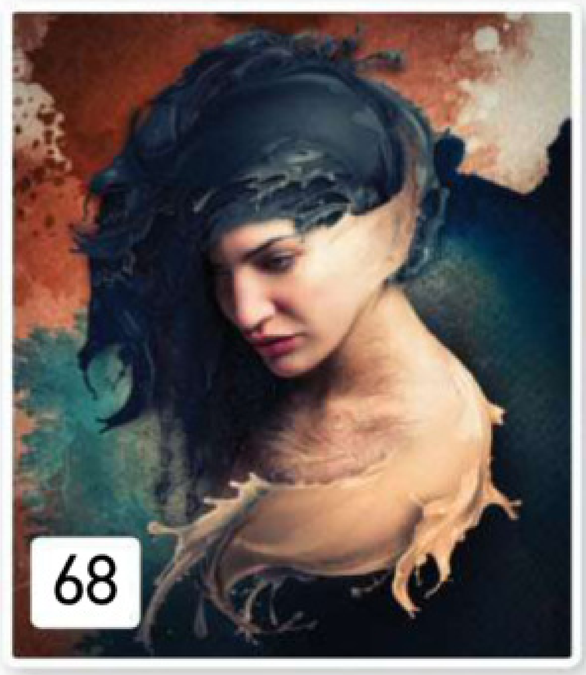
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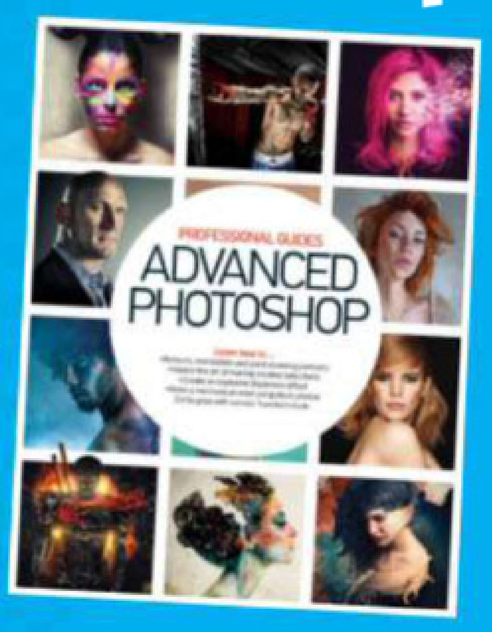


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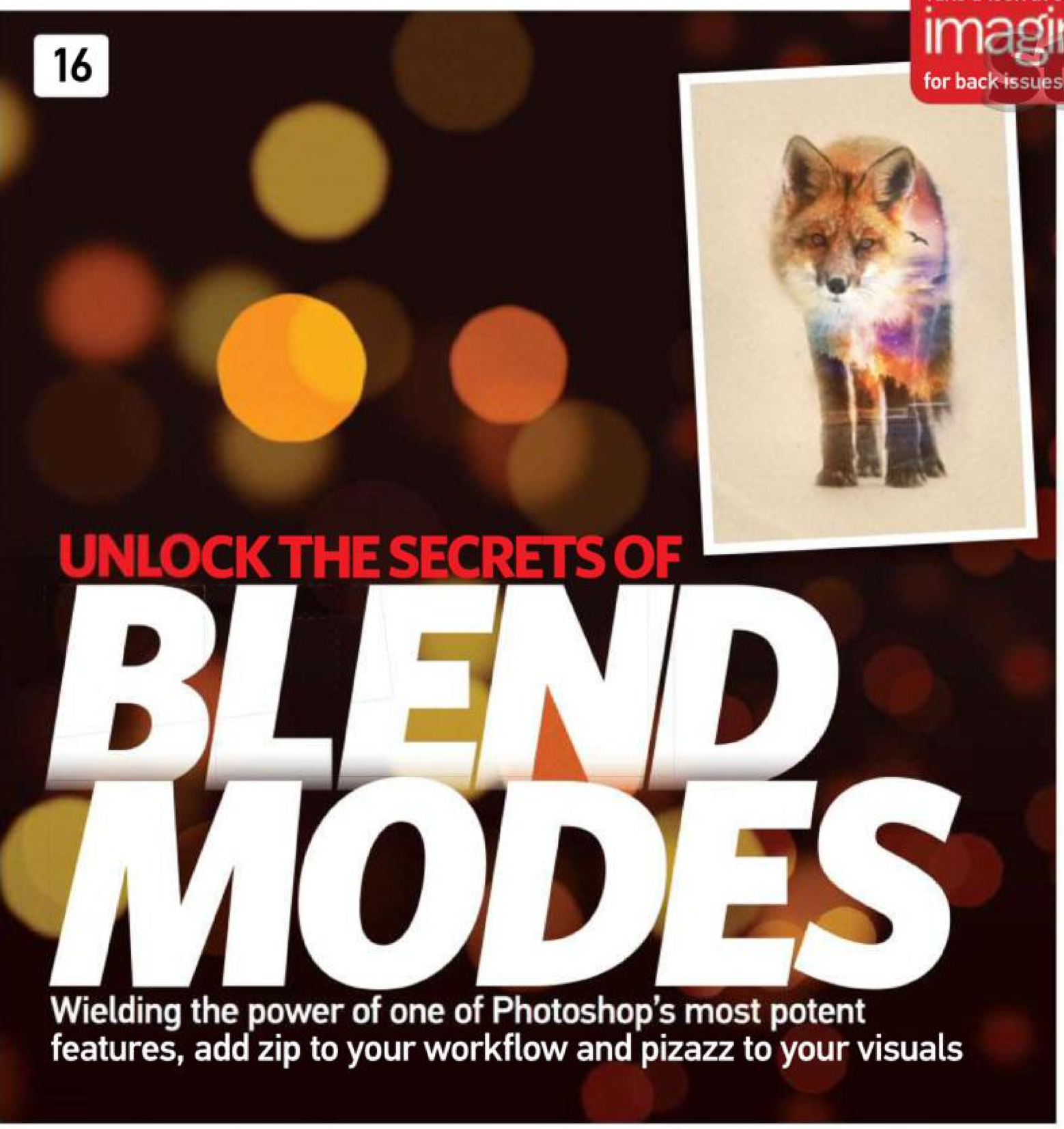
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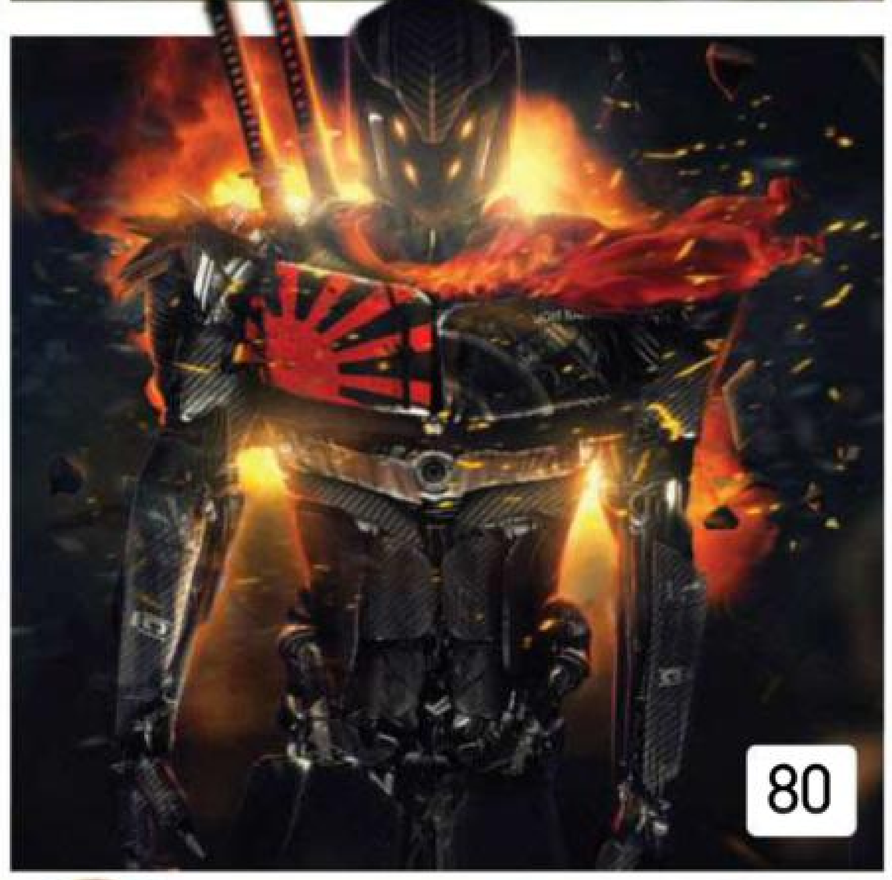
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UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF BLEND MODES

Wielding the power of one of Photoshop's most potent features, add zip to your workflow and pizazz to your visuals











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TRENDING IMAGES

Check out some of the most popular artwork that's been rocking the internet over the last few weeks, and take inspiration from what's currently trending

There's nothing more inspiring than surfing the internet and seeing what other artists are creating, and we really encourage you to do so. Here are some of our favourite pictures that caught our attention recently, from some of the world's most exciting artists and designers.



Surreal compositions can be some of the hardest to pull off and this is one for budding artists to study. Amr's had over 80,000 views for his Behance project



Amr Elshamy

www.behance.net/hotamr

"This started as a project in Cinema 4D, but the most fun part for me was later in Photoshop. I enjoyed adding the two earths, inserting some stars and nebula textures to the background, and balancing the colour and shade."



Emi Haze

www.emihaze.com

"The idea behind this picture was to convey the balance between reality and fantasy, dream and utopia. I wanted colour and sensitivity to be the focus of this picture, and for the subject to melt into the clouds in the picture."





Both Emi and Kevin have been extremely creative with their portraits. These pictures are testament to the amazing power of layers



Marie Beschorner

www.companyofwolves.de

"For *A Tale of Crows and Foxes* [below], I wanted dynamism and interesting colour contrasts, but *In the Heart of the Woods* [above] was centred more around capturing the sensations of a cold day in autumn. I like to tell a story."

Hyper-realistic paintings are one of the toughest things to pull off in Photoshop. Marie's *Company of Wolves* paintings, a series of which these are a part, trended on the internet for weeks. It's her attention to detail that has seen her amass nearly 3,000 Behance followers

Kevin Roodhorst

www.kevinroodhorst.com

"I used Cinema 4D to create the 3D renders that swirl around the subject. The fade of the model's neck is done with traditional paint. I also used photographs I shot in Rome for this."



Stefan Braas

www.westerart.de

"I love to use fire in my compositions! Some fire and smoke textures were inserted into this picture, and set to Screen. From there, I was almost already finished. I used some filters from the NIK Collection to tweak the colours slightly."

There's been some incredible art trending online since the Render Flames filter was introduced to CC, and Stefan's portrait shows that there's no limit to what you can create

Andrei Helio Alves

www.behance.net/AndreiAlves

"I based this picture on a real scene, but I wanted to add some details to keep it as natural as possible. The lighting and shadows really bring it to life; I used a lens flare among other tools to achieve the final effect."



We love Javier's contrasting colours here. The blocky technique seems rooted in the Eighties, but the vibrant UFOs give it a futuristic feel, which trends a lot on Tumblr at the moment

Javier G Pacheco

www.javiergpacheco.tumblr.com

"When I'm creating digital paintings, I like to create my own brushes to imitate traditional styles. Here I drew some basic lines in a layer and painted in the same way that I would on a real canvas."



The secret to a good out-of-bounds picture is conveying movement of something bursting through a screen. Andrei's composition is fun and that's why it's been liked over 300 times on Behance



Mario Olvera Molinar

www.olverart.deviantart.com

"These kinds of manipulations are experiments for me. This time, I asked the model to look to the left side so I could bring out the lighting on her face. I love sci-fi and I wanted to merge angelic imagery with a helmet and armour."

We love the juxtaposition of the harsh metallic surfaces with the feathery wings in this picture; it's a twist on the fantasy genre that is popular right now, and Mario has mastered it

READERS' IMAGES

Welcome to an inspirational round-up of great Photoshop artwork created by none other than your fellow readers



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Luís Rogério Faria Rosa
www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/premier
"This was based on the idea of showing the four seasons in just one garden. I comped the picture of the child into the picture to give it a feeling of innocence and added birds into the picture to finish up the creation."



Adriana Musetti Dávila
www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Adriana%20Musetti%20Dávila
"The starting point for me is always an inspiring stock image. In the main image of the fantasy tree, I painted over and added images to the composition. The smaller image was created with the idea of making an autumnal fairy."



Cleodson Cunha

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Cleodson

Image of the issue

"This is a fusion of nine stock photos that I trimmed and masked before adjusting the colours. I wanted to balance cool and warm colours to create a magical and enchanting atmosphere."



Rabin Dhakal

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/rabind1

"This image was made using Photoshop CS5. I depicted a girl who reflects the Earth: the colour, water and rainbow gradient were all used in this composition to give it a soft, sensitive feeling."

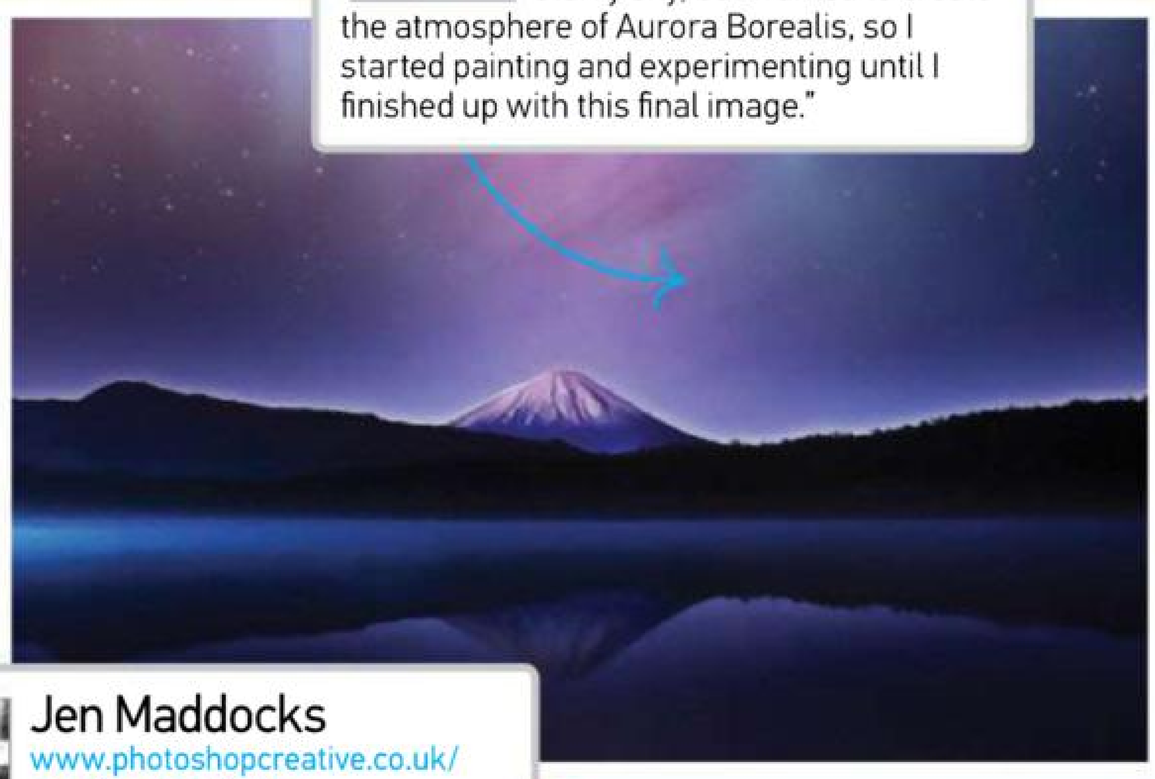




Genesis Raz von Edler

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/RazielMB

"I started working with a deep, starry sky, but wanted to create the atmosphere of Aurora Borealis, so I started painting and experimenting until I finished up with this final image."



Jen Maddocks

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/jenmaddocks

"I took several stock images I found online and merged them together by masking out parts of the image. I experimented with blend modes and opacities of each layer, until the whole picture focused more on the main subject of the woman."



tutorialsguru.com

READERS' CHALLENGE

Upload your images to **photoshopcreative.co.uk**

Challenge entries

The best entries and overall challenge winner

1 Lindsey Henderson

Oblivious

"This is a surreal image of a model admiring her beautiful umbrella completely unaware of what is happening in her surroundings. I used all four of the images and then chose to go with a dark theme."

2 Marcus Jones

Phew! That Coffee Was Strong

"I used the Polar Coordinates filter on the city image and did the same with the coffee cup. I then distorted the lady with the umbrella and placed her into the cup. It was all done in Elements 12."

3 Corine Spring

It Isn't Teatime

"All four of the challenge pictures were used for this entry. The theme I came up with is based on teatime, and other images – such as the castle and chessboard – were incorporated to create a surreal composition."

4 Noval Sirait

A False Report

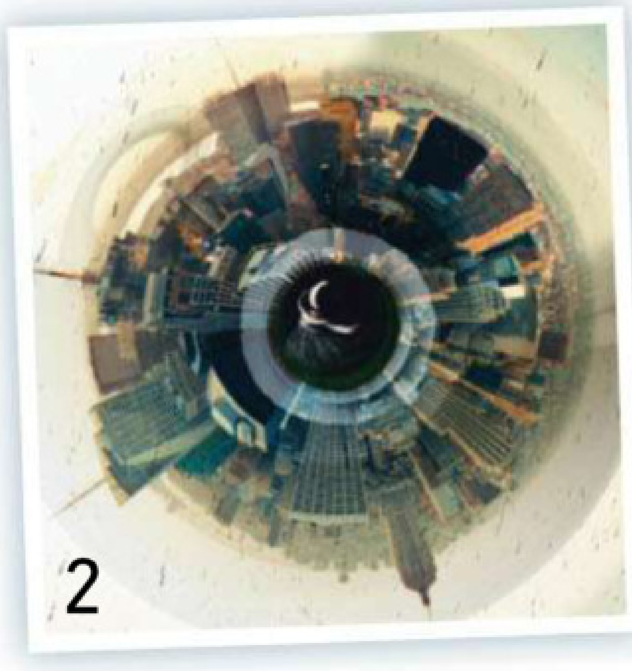
"The idea behind this challenge entry is of breaking news, which is included on the television screen. The city can be seen in the background and the rain is used on the television screen too."



We challenged you

In Issue 132, we challenged you to get creative with these four images. You were allowed to use any or all of the pictures and whatever other resources you choose.









This issue's challenge

Think you can do better? Prove it!

Get creative with the supplied images and you could win a fantastic prize! Use as many of the images as you like (from previous issues too!) and include your own photos if you wish. Head to www.photoshopcreative.co.uk and hit the Challenge link. Good luck!



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WÖNKY Films

Meet the creative collective producing award-winning animation for big brands, charities and in-house projects

Recently there has been an influx of companies that are relying on animation for maximum impact in their campaigns. Ahead of the game, WÖNKY films has been on the scene for almost 10 years, and offers cutting-edge animation for multiple platforms.

A BBC roster agency for graphics, a client list that includes some of the biggest brands, charities and agencies in the country, and award-winning in-house content – these are the features that set WÖNKY apart from its peers. It was set up in 2006 when co-founders Vicky Brophy and Miki Cash recognised an oncoming shift of content creation from TV to online. "It's taken longer than we had anticipated for the brands to migrate online, but we're now finally seeing this happen," explains Brophy. "By having to make smaller budgets go further during leaner financial times, brands have been forced to consider their online options and look outside of the usual large London agencies to produce their work more cost efficiently. We've certainly benefited from these changes, as they've started to work directly with production studios." WÖNKY works as a creative collective, pooling together the skills of a number of creatives. This setup has distinct advantages, says Brophy: "Working as a collective has been a key part of WÖNKY's structure from the outset and an incentive when setting up the company. Being a collective means we can work in a more collaborative and flexible way. It also ensures we can offer a variety of styles to clients, and create a unique look and feel for each project."

It also means that the production studio can offer a full service in animation production, from 2D to stop motion. "While the majority of our work is 2D, we have a particular passion for stop-motion," says Brophy. "Although we're mainly recognised for our character-based animation work, it's increasingly led to enquiries for character-based illustration work too. Being able to manage these diverse skills comes back to working as a collective, which enables us to draw in the particular set of skills for each job and meet the client's needs."

"WÖNKY is a great studio to work in," enthuses Jake Hobbs, head of digital. "We are a small tight-knit team that shares the same

Team WÖNKY at work

ABOUT THE STUDIO

WÖNKY FILMS
www.wonkyfilms.com
@WonkyFilms

WÖNKY Films is an award-winning animation company that creates content for multiple platforms. It specialises in designing characters and animating them in everything from 2D to stop-motion animation.



Vicky Brophy
Head of production / co-founder



Miki Cash
Creative director / co-founder



Jake Hobbs
Head of digital

A day in the life of Jake Hobbs

Hobbs talks us through a WÖNKY day

Morning coffee

10:00 The day is usually kickstarted with a cup of coffee, while going through that morning's emails and preparing for the day ahead.

Animation portal review

10:30 WÖNKY runs an online animation portal called Show Me The Animation dedicated to showcasing independent animation. Time in the morning is allocated to review the latest submissions.

Wireframes and planning

11:00 Before jumping into any code, time is always spent working up plans on paper or specialised wireframing software. This provides time to work out project flow and logic before getting stuck in.

Code, code, code!

13:30 Time to get stuck in to some development. Depending on the particular job this can vary from day to day; being a small studio means often turning my hand to different languages and platforms.

Debugging

17:00 Let's exterminate those pesky critters! Each day often ends with a testing and debugging session, going over the development work produced that day.

Lots of lists

18:30 Just before heading out of the studio, there is still time for the all-important to-do list – writing down the list of tasks for the next day, including the issues to be solved from the debugging time.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Treasure good clients Enjoy working with like-minded clients and make sure you go the extra mile. These are the ones that will come back. We haven't marketed WÖNKY for years, as it and its colleagues have kept popping up at opportune moments with interesting projects.

2. Don't forget to back up Always back up as you go. Boring, boring, boring... But, take it from us, it's a lot less boring than starting again the night before delivery, which is exactly when our computers have gone down on us in the past.

3. Stick to your guns Whether this is to do with creativity or managing a schedule, it's so easy to be squeezed by deadlines, bizarre feedback and last-minute changes of plan by the client. Years of experience show that the client can be managed if you are firm but fair from the word go.

4. Say no sometimes If your gut reaction is that there's something amiss, it's always better to admit it early on. There's nothing worse than being forced to turn down a great brief as you're too busy bogged down with a nightmare project.

5. Keep a balance Try to find a way to balance client work with your own projects. Try to get a creative idea or two out of your system each year in order to keep developing your own personal style and showcase what you can do.



Ace Discovery : Tom Gran and Martin Woolley, a writing duo from WÖNKY's Creative Collective, wrote and directed a pilot called *Ace Discovery* for Frederator Studios' Cartoon *Hangover*, the home of films that are too weird, wild and crazy for television



Jake and Alan busy in the Digital Hub

passion and values for animation, with a strong design aesthetic and a passion for humour. This makes it a pleasure to work together and fulfil creative ideas. The breadth of skills that our creative collective adds also means we work on such a diverse range of briefs, making each week different."

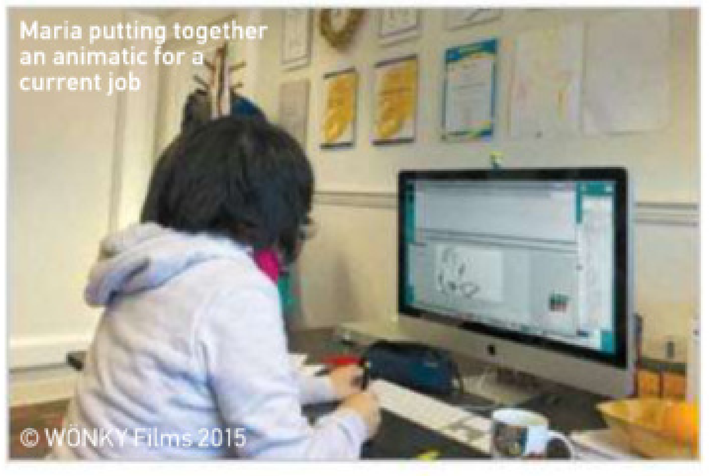
Producing high-quality and distinctive animations across a wide range of genres, brands and end products, means that WÖNKY uses a plethora of software packages. While Photoshop isn't used in the actual animation process, it plays a key role in generating the assets, in particular the quirky characters that WÖNKY is known for. "Photoshop is constantly used within our workflow, and the frequency we use it can vary from job to job and also from designer to designer," says Hobbs. "While some of our illustrators and designers work in Illustrator to create characters and design assets, the majority are using Photoshop to produce these assets. Our animators then bring these assets into Flash and/or After Effects to create the background scenes and character rigs. We also frequently use Photoshop to retouch images and for image optimisation."

WÖNKY's productions have a distinct style, usually based around the characters that Photoshop is used to create, and is something that clients come to them for. "We'd hope that most of our projects have a distinctive 'WÖNKY feel' to them, particularly through the sense of humour we enjoy integrating into both our characters and the animation," says Cash. "In cases where we're working with existing artwork, we'll apply our house style by adding in a few unexpected moments or extra details to make the animation itself as charming as the creative allows."

In order to really flex its creative muscles, the WÖNKY team tries to create a short film of its own every year. These are usually well received, with projects leading to multiple awards and screenings at film festivals across the world. It is currently working on an in-house app development project, which is under wraps for the time being, but is proving quite the challenge, as Hobbs explains: "It's a relatively new area for us as a company. This brings with it a lot of new skills to be learnt and obstacles to overcome. The app is exploring ways to enable users to interact with our animation work and create their own personalised shows. Many of the challenges have been in the technical development of the app, understanding what is possible and learning how it can be achieved."

When it comes to client work, it is the projects when the client trusts in the team and what it can achieve that WÖNKY has the most fun. "It's fantastic when you're working with a truly creative client with a similar sense of humour where we can spark ideas off of one another," says Cash.

"We love what we do and don't want to become too big, as we enjoy being so hands-on and directly involved with the creative process," says Brothy. "However, we're up for the projects getting bigger and hope to see more of our own ideas seeing the light of day. Ideally we'd increase the ratio of our in-house projects to our client ones in the hope that one of them becomes a spin off with a life of its own. Our strategy the past few years is to increase our digital and social media expertise in order to help achieve this."



Maria putting together an animatic for a current job



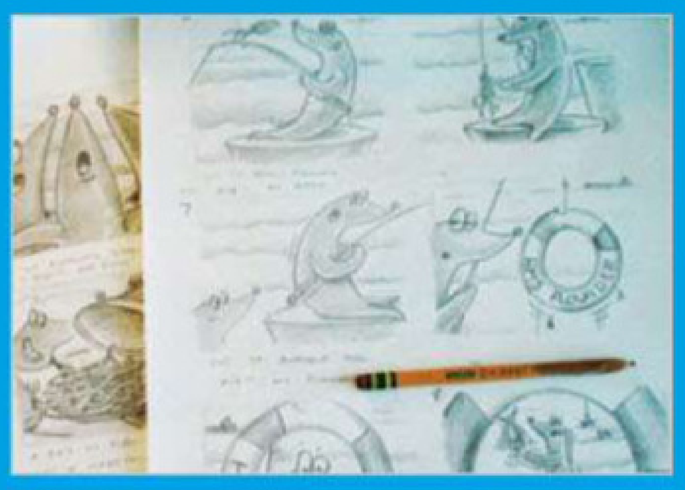
Ain't No Fish : Fish burst into song upon an iceberg in this quirky, short stop-motion animated film, which received multiple awards and numerous film festival screenings

Ain't No Fish A stop-motion animation featuring an easy-go-lucky song about fishing



Research

01 The idea was born years before production started. Directors Miki Cash and Tom Gasek came up with it in the early Nineties when catastrophic events at sea involving oil spills had been having devastating effects on wildlife and the sea.



Storyboard and animatic

02 Work on the initial storyboard was started in the Nineties, and when resuming work on the film almost 20 years later they found that very little needed changing. The characters were kept exactly as initially illustrated by Elizabeth Buttler.



Set up

03 Now not having to rely on using traditional 3D sets, Gasek and Cash were able to work from their own stop-motion setups. Utilising Dropbox and Skype to produce the film simultaneously across two continents.



Animation

04 Claymation was used by animating Plasticine models on glass against green screen ready to be superimposed into the animated backgrounds. Physical models of waves created in the Nineties were dusted off and used in over 50 layers to form the sea.



Post production

05 After Effects was finally used to give the Arctic setting a more contemporary feel that lent itself well to the optimistic show tune, while juxtaposing against the darker subtext within the film.

UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF BLEND MODES

Wielding the power of one of Photoshop's most potent features, add zip to your workflow and pizazz to your visuals

Have you taken a picture that needs a little more oomph? Using a blend mode is the perfect way to take your image-making to the next level. They allow you to specify how a layer interacts with the image below it. Simply select a layer and choose a blend mode from the drop-down menu.

As well as the ever-popular double-exposure effect, you can use blend modes to add to and enhance your watery captures. Use a Darken mode like Multiply to bring in moody undercurrents, a lighten mode like Screen to import frothing surges, or a contrast mode like Soft Light to borrow a bit of both dark and light features. Need to get a little wild? Use Overlay for surreal fun. Employ blend modes to enhance sophisticated designs, or blend individual elements, then use them on overarching colour, texture and adjustments.

Follow along to see how you can use blend modes to bring the best out of your work!

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN...



MIX PHOTOS
Make a stunning and colourful double-exposure image using textures and layers.



PAINT WATER
Learn techniques for painting a refreshingly realistic water texture using custom brushes.



ADD EFFECTS
Use the Multiply blend mode in Photoshop 3D to make a watery transparent cube.



CREATE TEXT
Experiment with blend modes to blend colour beautifully and stack images for abstract text.



GO SURREAL
Create a surreal image with the help of blend modes, adjustment layers and layer masks.

Create a double exposure

Have you ever tried just lowering opacities to merge multiple layers? The usually hazy, washed-out result may have turned you off the whole idea of blending.

But blend modes are here to help! Stack two or more layers, then use blend modes to create a pleasing merge. After you've employed the proper mode(s), you may notice that some parts of the layers need to be excised. No worries, just call upon masks to aid you in fine-tuning the blend by controlling the visibility of the layers. Now let's create a double-exposure effect.

TEXTURES
Textures set to blend modes can help tie all the disparate photos used in the composition into a more cohesive whole.

BLEND MODES
Blend modes are absolutely key to creating an effective double-exposure effect. Here, Screen and Lighten form the blend's foundation.



LAYER MASKS
Where blend modes prove overbearing, you can apply a layer mask to the layer and paint with black to remove or reduce.

EXPERT TIP

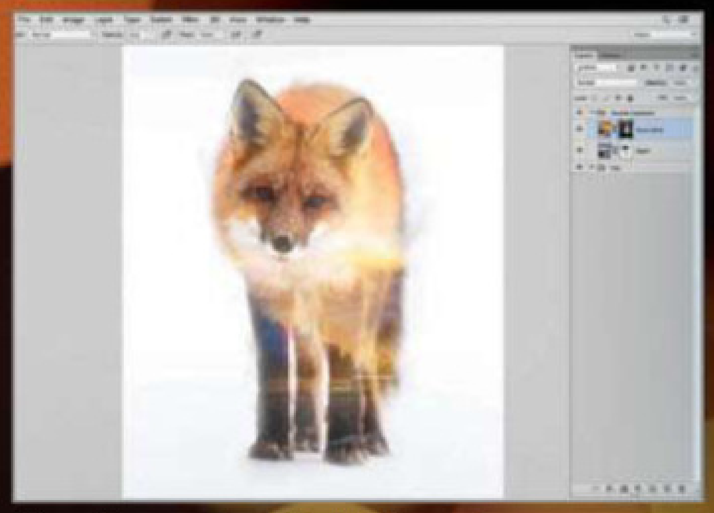
Self-blend

Duplicating a layer (or merging layers) and setting to an appropriate blend mode can be a quick way to add vigour. You can achieve the same result by applying a Levels adjustment layer (don't adjust settings) and changing the blend mode (like Soft Light).



Prepare subject and photos

01 Start with 'Fox.psd' or source another animal. Next, compile imagery you'll use for the double exposure. We've supplied a variety of photos, but feel free to gather your own. You can even get some incongruous imagery like buildings or traffic.



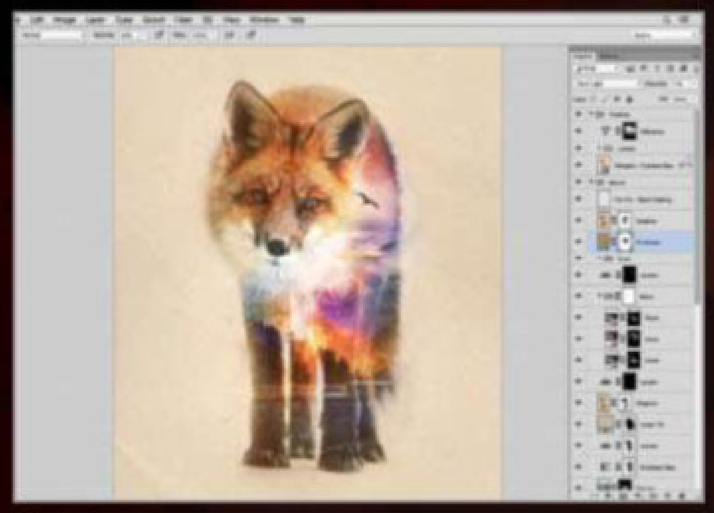
Perform initial blend

02 Place the images atop the animal. Here 'Dawn.jpg' and 'Mountains.jpg' were placed, then set to Lighten and Screen respectively to blend. To help get the imagery within the animal's bounds, apply layer masks and paint with black to reduce.



Layer up

03 Now you need to continue to add more and more images to enhance the overall picture, using the process outlined in step 2. For variety, you can try using the contrast modes like Overlay and Soft Light, and Darken modes like Multiply and Linear Burn.



Add texture

04 To tie everything together, place a texture like 'Envelope.jpg' and set to a mode like Soft Light. Copy (Cmd/Ctrl+J), set the duplicate to Multiply. Use layer masks and lowered opacity to reduce. Employ adjustment layers like Levels and Gradient Map to finalise.

UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF

BLEND MODES

Paint water textures

To create a realistic glistening water texture, first create a solid base colour. This is going to work as the midtone colour, then you basically have to use two blend modes to control the dark and light values: Multiply and Linear dodge.

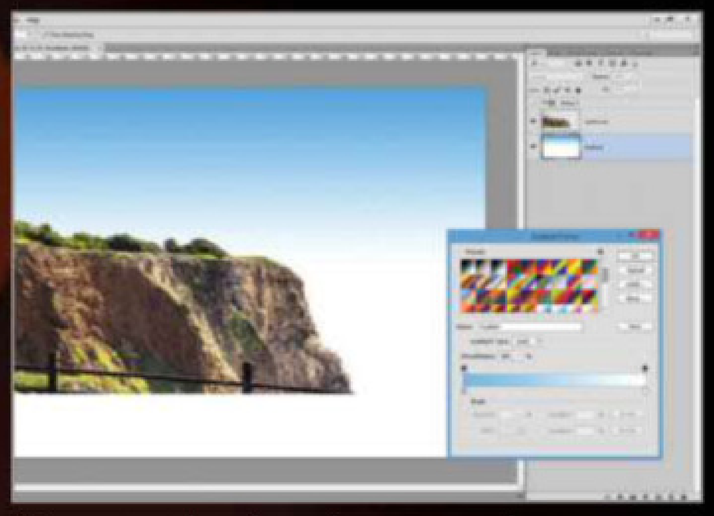
Change the brush's blend mode and modify the brush's dynamic – always vary the size and spacing. Set the brush's Opacity to around 50% and start painting the water surface. You can experiment with each blend mode to create different stroke values, then use the adjustment layers to make the colour corrections.

EXPERT TIP

Test them out

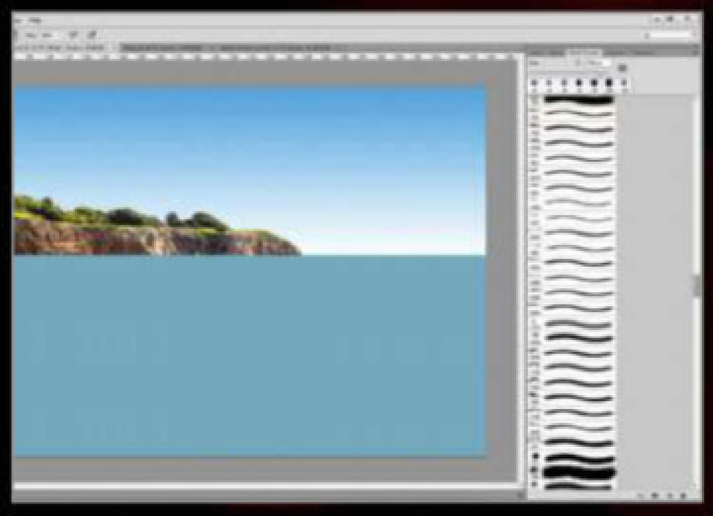
Remember: the Lighten modes boost the colour vibrancy and add a brightening effect. The Darken modes boost the contrast and create a darkening effect. Try them out. Experiment with each blend mode to discover how they work and how it can be useful in your project.





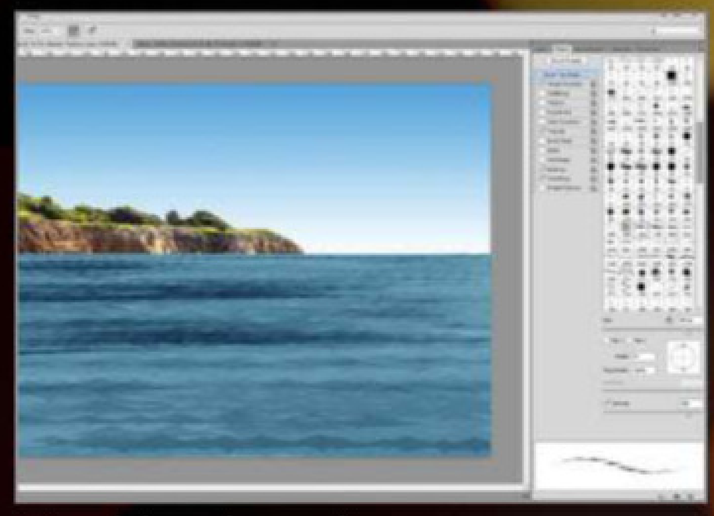
Create the background

01 Create a new document. Grab the Gradient tool (G). Open the Gradient Editor and define a two-stop gradient, selecting light-blue and white. Change it to Linear. Hold Shift and drag the gradient from top to bottom. Now go to File>Place 'Lighthouse.png'.



Load custom brushes

02 Create a new layer. Grab the Rectangular Marquee tool and select the half-bottom of the canvas. Fill it with colour #6daabf. Grab the Brush tool (B) and then go to Windows> Brush Preset and Load the custom brush 'Waves_Brushes.abr'.



Use blend modes

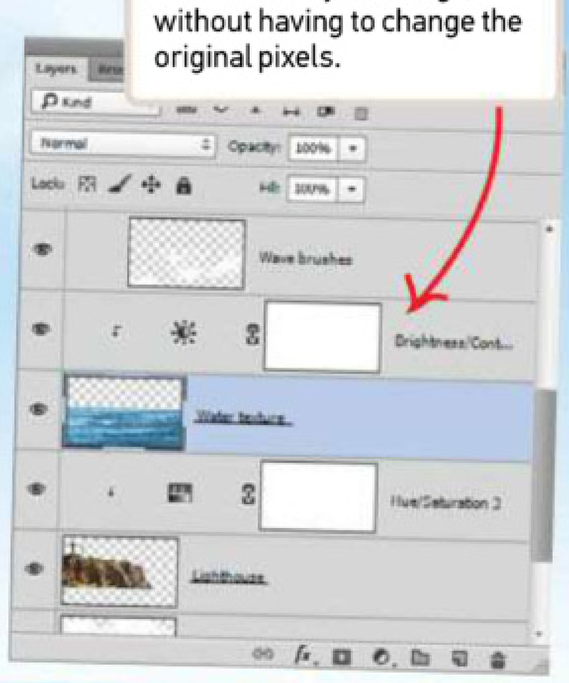
03 Now hit F5 and choose the 'wave1.abr' brushes. Vary the brush size and spacing. Check Shape Dynamics and set Size Jitter to 50%. In the Options bar set the Mode to Multiply and the Opacity to 50%. Then start to paint the waves.

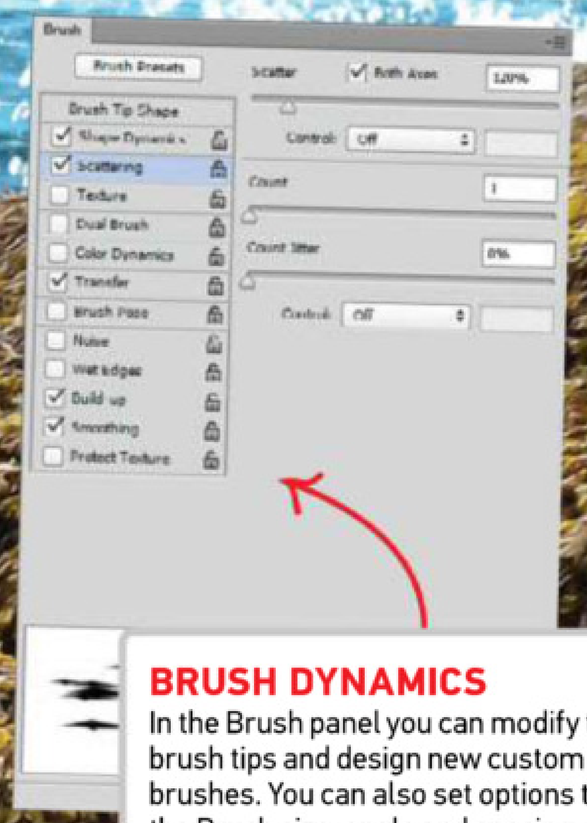
CUSTOM BRUSHES

Use custom brushes to create textures. To load custom brushes go to Edit>Preset>Preset Manager. Locate the brush file and hit Load.

ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

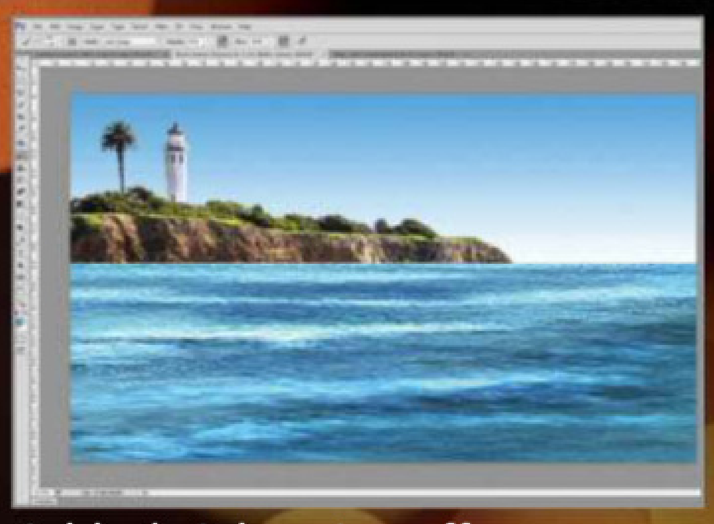
Use the adjustment layers to make tonal corrections, enhance or change colours and fine tune your image without having to change the original pixels.





BRUSH DYNAMICS

In the Brush panel you can modify the brush tips and design new custom brushes. You can also set options to vary the Brush size, angle and spacing.



Add a brightening effect

04 In the Brush panel, check Scattering, click both axes and set the Scatter to 120%. To add highlights, change the brush blend mode to Color Dodge or Linear Dodge (Add). Vary the brush size and spacing. Paint the highlights. Complete by adding more images.

Make a transparent cube

You can easily create amazing transparent effects using only the Multiply blend mode. Find a good starting image or use Photoshop 3D to create your own cube. Now place the surface water texture at the bottom. Use the Free Transform tool to adjust the perspective. With the surface in place, start adding the walls to fill the cube. Place the water images around the surface, use the Free Transform tool to make it fit and change the blending mode to Multiply. Clip the layers and use custom brushes to create a splash effect.



UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF

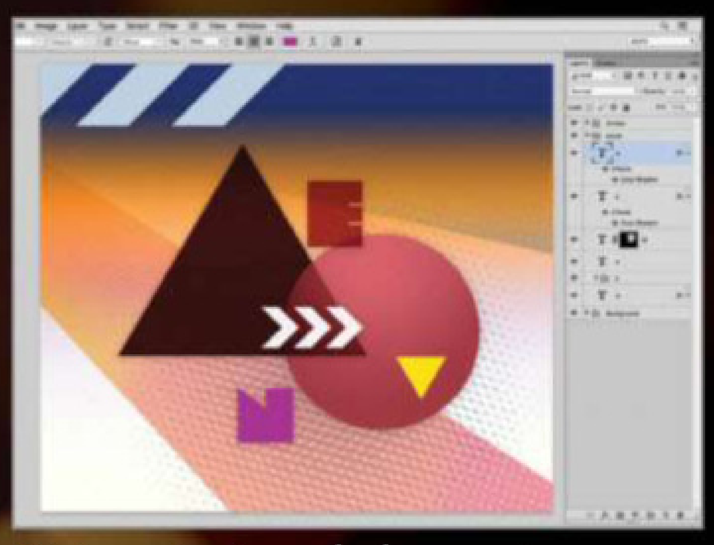
BLEND MODES

Compose abstract text

Blend modes can bring beautiful and intricate blends of colour to your design easily. Stacking multi-coloured imagery atop each other and trying various modes can produce lively backdrops and unexpected bursts of vibrancy. When constructing colourful typographic compositions, you can use blend modes on both the typography and supporting imagery or elements. When you're at a loss as to which blend mode to use, just start going through them to see if anything clicks. When things aren't working out, try shuffling the order of blended layers. As a finishing touch, you can use colour and blend modes at the top of the layer stack for refreshing glows and spot recolouring.

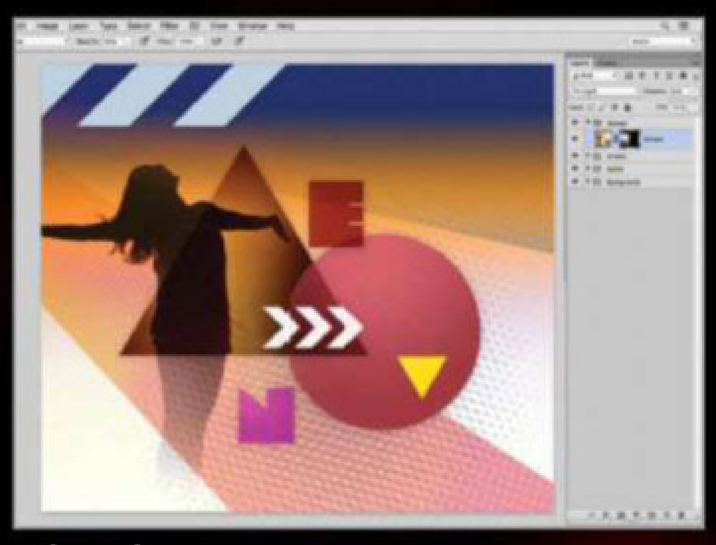


ENDLESS VARIATIONS
Experiment with different blend modes. Shuffling the order of blended layers can drastically alter the look. Take note of worthy combinations for future projects.



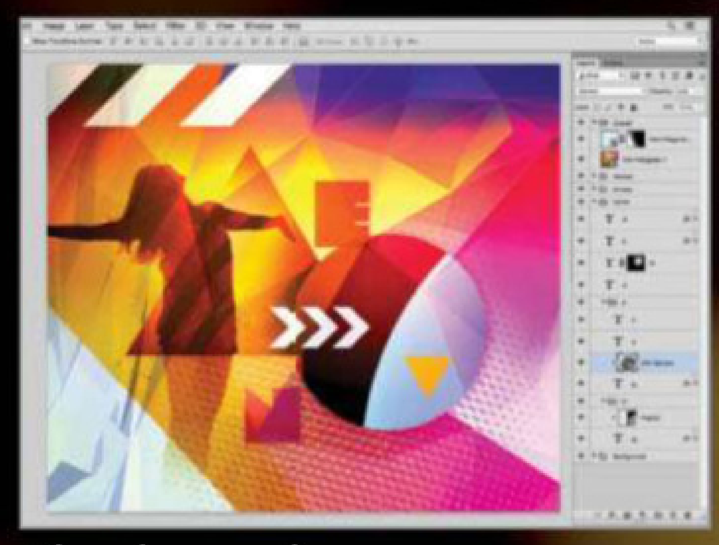
Set up text and elements

01 Open 'Start.psd'. This contains the starting background. On layers above, use the Type tool to add your text. The text here was created with the Lot font from **fontfabric.com.** Deploy each letter on a separate layer. Decorate with layer styles and add supporting shapes.



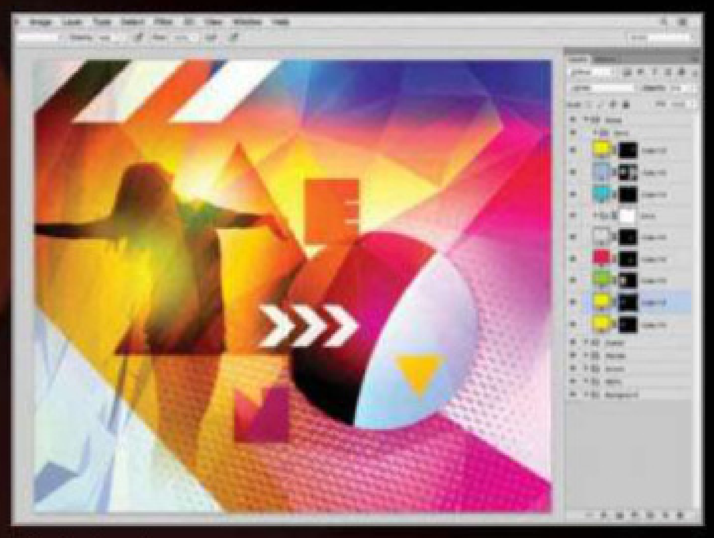
Blend woman

02 Now place the 'Woman.jpg' image, position it where you want and then confirm. To start the blend, set to Pin Light. Drop the opacity a bit to 90%. Add a layer mask and then paint black to fade the edges, getting a nice blend.



Blend more layers

03 Place 'MM-Polygons-1' and set to Vivid Light. Place 'MM-Polygons-2' and set to Multiply. To reduce, add a layer mask and paint black. Mix in other imagery – 'MM-Sphere.png' and 'Fractal.jpg'. Place them above letters and clip by Option/Alt+clicking between layers.



Add glows

04 Click the 'Create new fill' or 'Adjustment layer' in the Layers palette, choose Solid Color. Pick #f3eb0d. Set to Lighten. Click the mask, invert it with (Cmd/Ctrl+I). With the Brush tool and a soft-edged tip, paint to add a glow. Repeat with other colours. Try Color Dodge.

Experiment with blending

After you get into the groove of stacking images and applying blend modes, why not branch out into experimental territory and see how far you can push your blending?

Study how adjustment layers work when you change their blend modes. Lower opacity on a layer with a blend mode – there are some modes, like Difference, that react differently when you alter the fill opacity instead of layer opacity. Change a layer group's blend mode for efficient mass blending.



Add surreal effects

You can easily achieve a surreal effect with the help of blend modes. Start by adding the images using basic techniques such as layer masks and adjustments layers. Now place a texture over the mannequin and set the mode to Multiply to create an interesting effect (Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip the layers). To create the light over the grass, add a new layer and fill it with 50% gray (use the Edit>Fill command), set the mode to Overlay and then use the Dodge and Burn tool to create the light and add shadows around the edges. Add a glowing light bulb effect by filling a new layer with black and then go to Filter>Render> Lens Flare. Choose 105mm Prime and click OK. Now change the blending mode to Screen.



HIGH PASS

Merge the layers and duplicate it. Now change the blending mode to Overlay and apply the High Pass filter (Filter>Others) to make the image sharper.

NEUTRAL LAYER

Filling a layer with 50% gray and setting the blend mode to Overlay, allows you to control the darker and lighter tones and add shadows and highlights.

EXPERT TIP

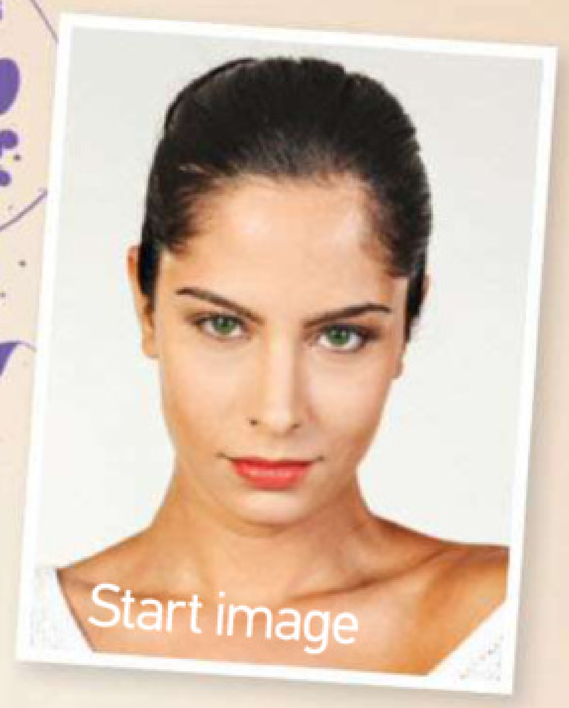
Blend if

Go to Layer>Layer Style>Blending Options. Look for the 'Blend if area' at the bottom of the panel. The sliders control how the selected layer blends with the underlying layer. Hold Option/Alt and drag the two slider's halves to create a smooth transition across the tones.



StoreMags.com

Need colour inspiration? Try color.adobe.com!



Explore colour with blend modes

Unleash a barrage of colour via brushwork, blend modes and adjustments to re-imagine a portrait

Colour is one of the key considerations when working with art and design. As with any important tool or feature, knowing how to use and deploy colour is essential. Once you internalise the various ways you can unleash it, you are able to devote more energy into having fun and less on the mechanical and procedural aspects.

One of the main ways we'll be working with colour here is through blend modes. We'll place a variety of images, such as polygonal and mixed-media stock from **mediamilitia.com**. By changing their blend modes and overlaying atop the portrait and each other, we can create interesting and unpredictable colour blends.

Shape layers are a fun way to add colourful shapes. Tossing in paint imagery is also a blast. Although we don't specify in the tutorial, you can apply Color Overlay and Gradient Overlay layer styles to reupholster layers with solid or graduated colour. As we pile layer upon layer of colour and texture, we'll copy the original model to reinforce, controlling via layer masks, blend modes and opacity. We'll then finalise things with a series of adjustments and Color Fill layers.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

Play with colour via brushwork, blend modes and adjustment layers

Time taken

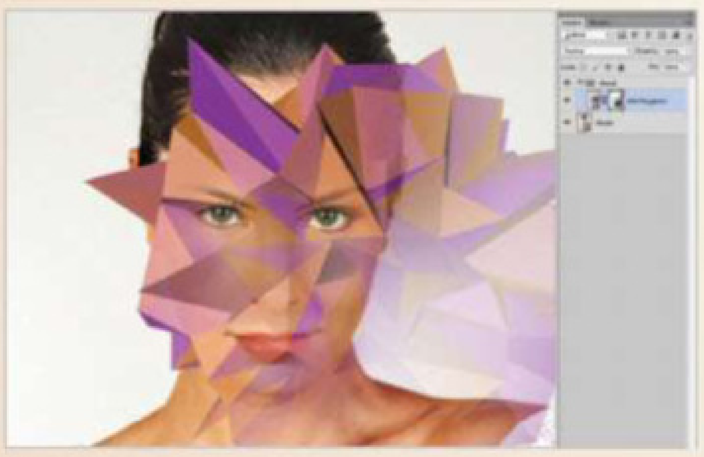
1-2 hours

Expert



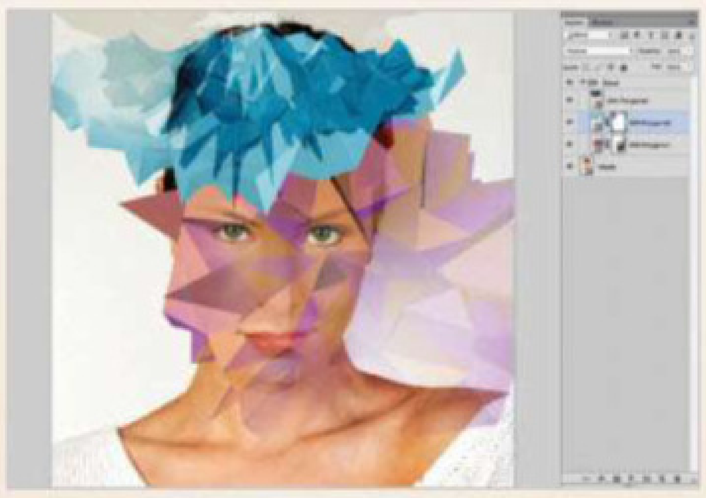
Andre Villanueva

"I enjoy how Photoshop allows me to unleash colour upon my designs and artwork. Two of my favourite methods are painting with Color Fill layers and getting interesting layer blends by spinning through the blend modes. I discovered Photoshop when studying web design. I'm now art director for a tech company, soothing my inner instructor by sharing techniques."



Add polygons

01 Open 'Start.psd' from the FileSilo. Go to File>Place (Place Embedded in CC), choose 'MM-Polygons1.png'. Position flush to the right and press Return/Enter. Click the 'Add layer mask' button in the Layers palette. Paint black in the mask with a Soft Round brush at 40-80% Opacity.



Place more polygons

02 Place 'MM-Polygons2.png', position at the top and confirm. Add a layer mask and reduce with black. Place 'MM-Polygons3.png'. Set to Overlay using the blend mode drop-down at the top of the Layers palette.



Blend light

03 Place 'Light1.jpg', confirm and set to Overlay. Place 'Light2.jpg', position flush to the bottom and confirm. Set to Subtract blend mode (Elements: use Difference). Add layer masks to both layers and reduce with black where needed.



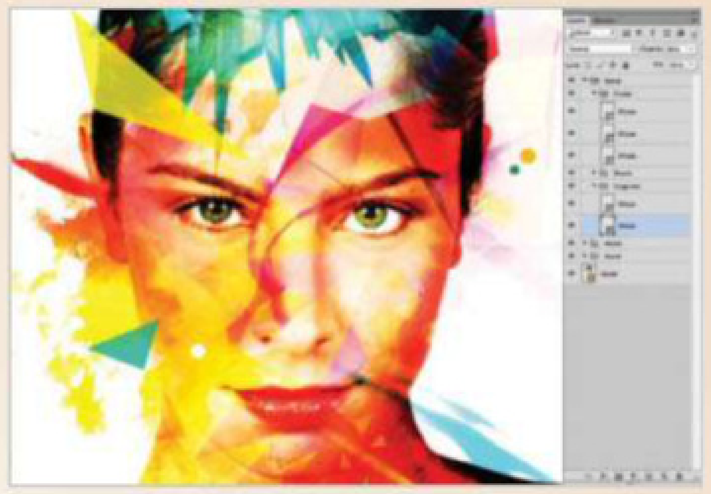
Add paint

04 Place 'Paint1.jpg', confirm and set to Overlay. Place 'Paint2.jpg', 'Paint3.jpg' and 'Paint4.jpg'. Set to the Linear Light or Overlay blend modes. Add layer masks and paint black to reduce these. Scale, rotate and position with Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) if you think it's needed.



Tame the chromatic chaos

05 Option/Alt+click and drag the original model layer to the top of the layer stack to copy. Set the blend mode to Overlay. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy the layer (reduce Opacity if needed). That should clean up extraneous detail from previous steps. Refine previous masks if needed.



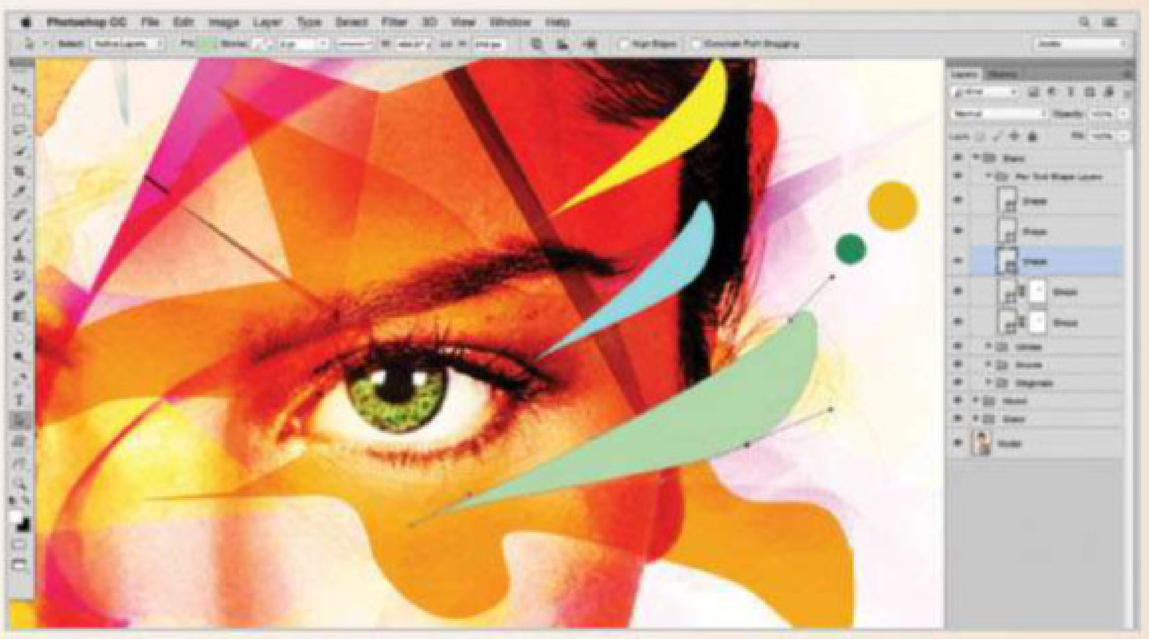
Introduce shapes

06 Add some shapes on new layers with various Shape tools like Ellipse, Polygon and Custom. In Photoshop, ensure Shape is selected in the options bar to keep as vector shape layers. The initial colour is dictated by the Foreground colour. We used white, #fffc00, #f0b920 and #1ea98d.



Enlist the Pen tool

07 In Photoshop, you can use the Pen tool (set to Shape) to create custom shapes. Create a new layer for each shape. Click to create corner points, or click and drag to create smooth points, until you reach back to the origin to complete the shape. In Elements, you can use the Marquee tools.



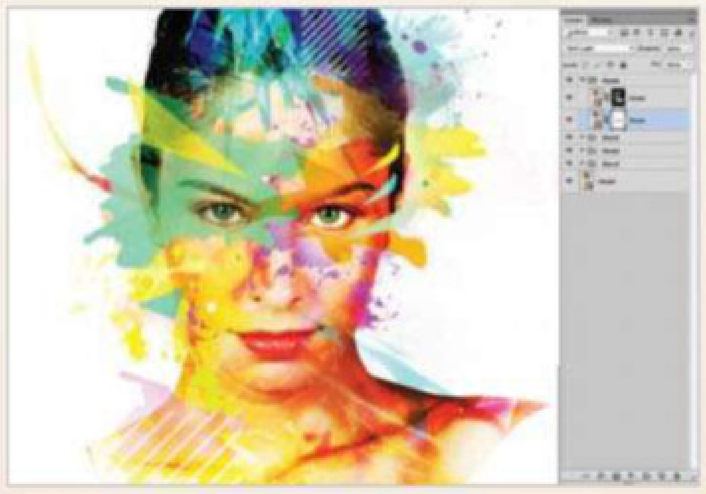
Adjust shape layers

08 With the Direct Selection tool (Photoshop), you can adjust shape layers' paths. Click and drag to adjust points and path segments. Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+click on a smooth point to convert to a corner point. Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+click and drag on a corner point to convert to a smooth point. Elements users can use Warp (Edit>Transform).



Add splats

09 Add some splats and mixed media by placing 'Splat.png', 'Watercolor.png', 'MM-MixedMedia.jpg' and any other interesting images you'd like to throw in. Add layer masks and reduce with black. Experiment with the blend modes. Free Transform if needed.



Reinforce the model

10 Option/Alt+click and then drag the original model layer to the top of the layer stack again. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy the layer. Set the bottom one to Soft Light and then drop the top one's Opacity to 60% (or less). Add layer masks to both. Paint with black to reduce.



Position some splatters

11 Place 'MM-Watercolor1.jpg' and 'MM-Watercolor2.jpg' and position them to the left and right of the model respectively. Set to Darken or Multiply. Add layer masks if you think it's needed and paint black to reduce.

StoreMags

Need colour inspiration? Try color.adobe.com!



Add lines

12 Place 'Lines.jpg', position at the top, then confirm. Set to Linear Dodge (Add). Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and reposition. Add layer masks and paint black in the masks to reduce.



Color Fill and Lookup

13 Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' in the Layers palette, choose Solid Color. Pick #b5b5b5 and drop to 70% Opacity. Click mask, paint black in the centre to reduce. Click the fill/adjustment button, choose Color Lookup – Teal Orange Plus Contrast. (Elements: use Photo Filter – Warming Filter (85)). Paint black in the mask to reduce.

Expert tip

Colour palette

Regarding your colour palette, it's usually prudent to strategise ahead of production. Think about what colour combination(s) you'd like. If you're building something in accordance to branding standards or established art direction, you need to have a game plan. If you're doing something for fun, like the image here, you can feel out the palette as you go. Tighten up and refine the palette as the elements start to coalesce.



Inject more colour

14 Add another Color Fill layer and choose #d733e6. Set the blend mode to Overlay. Click the mask and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert it. Paint with white to add. Continue to add different colours (such as #4aee26 and #f7eb06) via new Color Fill layers set to Overlay or Lighten.



Finalise

15 As you're adding colour, experiment with the more exotic and artistic brushes. If you need to change a Color Fill's colour, double-click on the layer's thumbnail and choose a new colour. Also, take some time to revisit earlier layers and refine the composition where needed.

What you'll learn

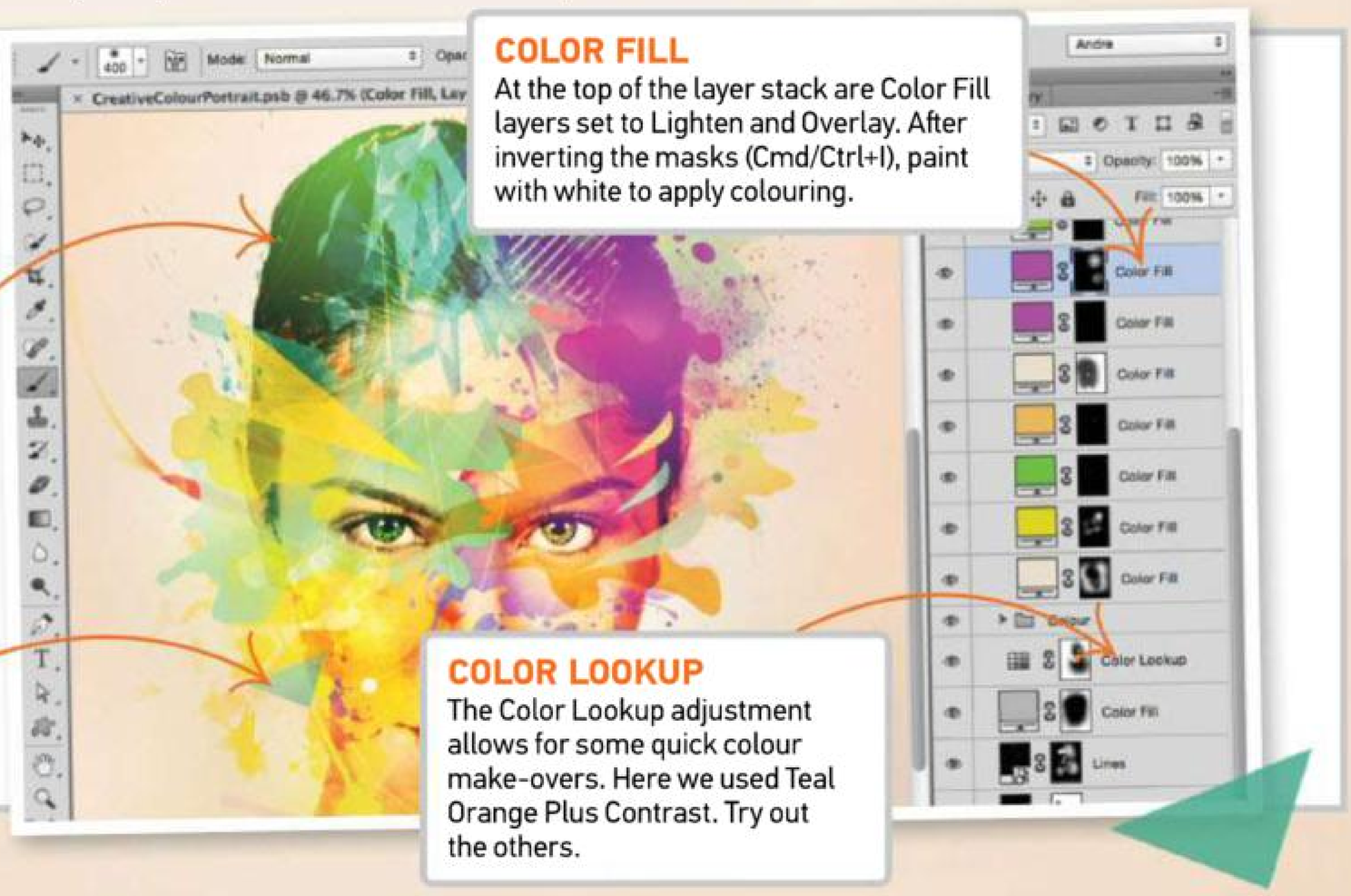
Essential creative colour techniques

REINFORCE THE MODEL

As your subject gets overwhelmed beneath layers of shapes and colours, you can bolster the model by copying the layer above blended elements. Lower opacity, mask and use blend modes to merge.

BLEND MODES

Playing with blend modes can result in anything from subtle to unexpectedly wild mixes. Use the tutorial as a guide, but feel free to experiment with the different modes.



COLOR FILL

At the top of the layer stack are Color Fill layers set to Lighten and Overlay. After inverting the masks (Cmd/Ctrl+I), paint with white to apply colouring.

COLOR LOOKUP

The Color Lookup adjustment allows for some quick colour make-overs. Here we used Teal Orange Plus Contrast. Try out the others.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

- The best way to photomanipulate a glass globe and place a scene

Time taken

3 hours

Expert



Mark White

"Whether it's glass, water or ice, I love creating translucent objects in Photoshop. It's difficult to create something see-through and realistic, so it's even more satisfying when you get a good result. As senior staff writer on Photoshop Creative, I've learned all kinds of quick tips to help with even the most impressive-looking pictures."



Create a scene in a bauble

Get in touch with your festive side and create a magical sphere with layers, masking and blend modes

Artists are always looking to think outside the box, but sometimes it can be more creative to place a larger-than-life scene inside a tiny object.

The idea of placing characters and objects into a bauble is one that you can really run with and by scattering snow brushes across the final picture, you can create a magical masterpiece. You might want to place people you know into the snowy scene, even entire cities and you may want to add clouds into the bauble, to give the effect of it actually snowing in the scene.

The key to the composition is how you use layers and masks to give the illusion of a glass globe. Be sure to allow absolutely no bleed over the edges of the bauble to keep everything contained in the scene. Create your own bauble or use ours, and make certain that every object is perfectly cut out. Get creative with the project, and think inside the globe rather than outside the box.



Create the loop

01 Start off by pasting the globe from the resources into your 'before.psd' image, or create one using the Expert Edit on the next page. Insert the bauble and mask out the entire photo except for the loop on the top of it.



Paste some grass

02 Place some grass. Duplicate it so that it stretches across the width of the bauble, with space to place some soil beneath. Group these grass images together, then Cmd/Ctrl+Click the bauble mask, and hit Mask on the grass group to mask out the sides. Name this group 'Inside the bauble'.

Expert tip

Creating the grass

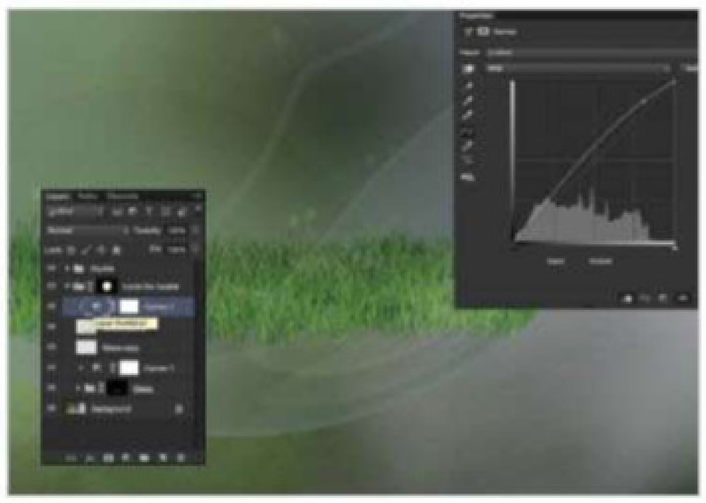
Here the grass is created using a Round Point Stiff brush to give it the realistic pointy edges. If you use a graphics tablet, you can very easily just flick your brush to create the strands of grass; use a 50% Opaque brush for to ensure the grass remains subtle and looks as real as possible.

If you're still struggling to create grass yourself using this method though, experiment with the Grass and Dune Grass brushes instead, which can be found as default in Photoshop.



Mask the grass

03 Within your grass group, group these layers again. Hit Mask, Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the mask and with a brush of between 5 and 15px, start stroking upwards to create a realistic grass texture across the width of the bauble.



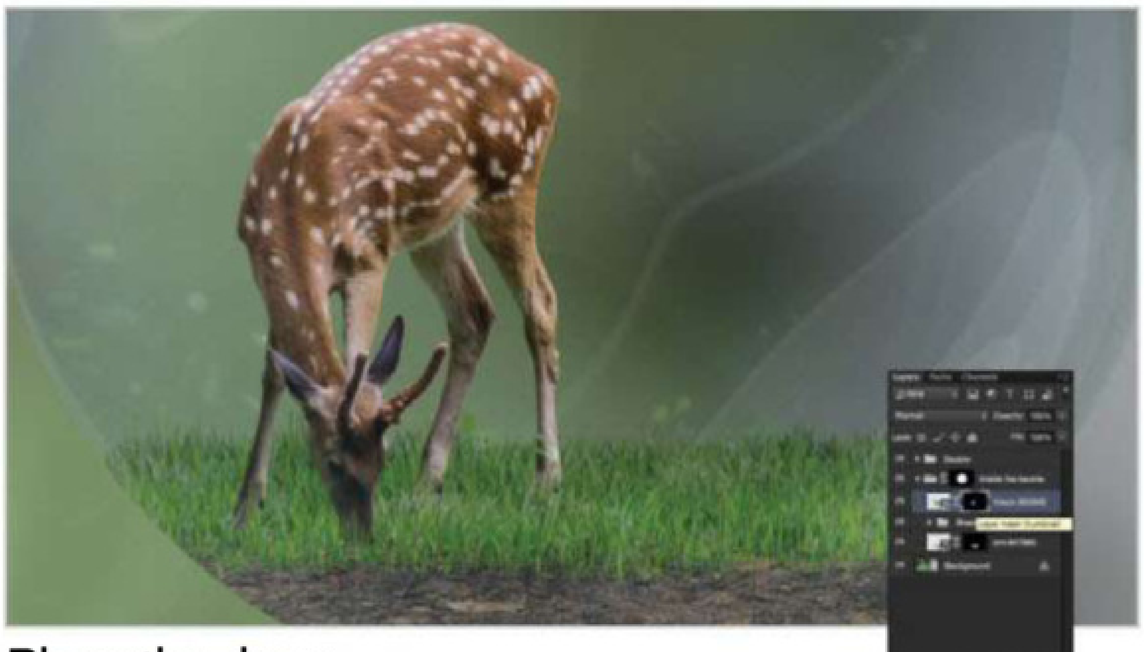
Layer it up

04 Duplicate this grass group twice. Ctrl/Right-click and Merge the layers within each group, before placing one below the original grass group and one above. Clip Curve adjustment layers to lighten and darken the grass below and above the original group, to add depth.



Plant the soil

05 Place a soil image in the 'Inside the bauble' group, below the grass layers. Hit Mask, Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the mask and with a soft, white brush, mask in the soil paying attention to make sure it blends in with the grass.



Place the deer

06 Find your deer and using the Pen tool, select it, before pasting it in the 'Inside the bauble' group, on top of the grass. Using the technique you used to mask the grass, mask out blades of grass around the deer's hooves to blend it into the scene.



Insert the tree

07 Now we're going to add a tree into the image to the right of the deer. Paste 'Tree.psd' from the FileSilo before using Select>Colour Range to find all of the blue sky in the picture. Hit OK once selected and hit mask, then Cmd/Ctrl+I to be left with just the tree's outline.

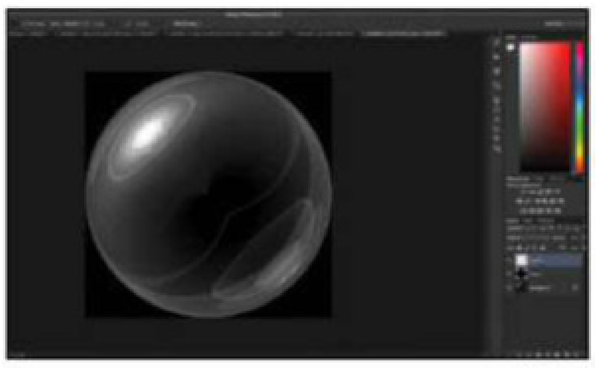
Expert edit

Create the sphere



Start with the shine

01 Create a new document of 200x200 pixels, 300dpi. Fill with black and go to Filter>Lighting Effects>Lens Flare. Select the default one and then Distort>Polar Coordinates>Polar to Rectangular.



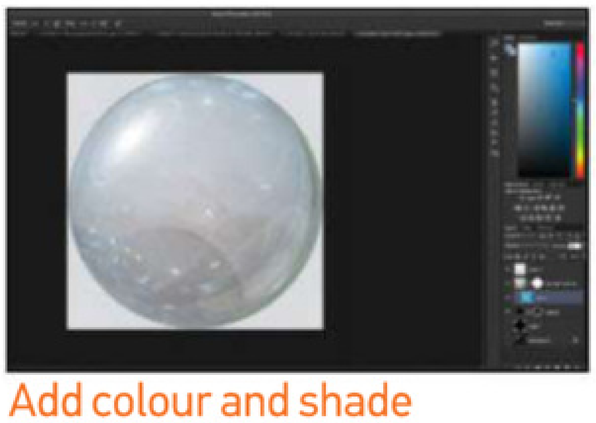
Select and whiten

02 Flip your lens flare vertically, then go to Polar Coordinates. Select Rectangular to Polar. Go to Channels and hit the Load Channel As Selection icon. Now insert a new layer and fill white three times.



Insert the bulb

03 Paste a lightbulb into the picture. Use the Option/Alt key along with the brush to select colours and brush out the filament. Hit Multiply.



Add colour and shade

04 Add a black fill layer beneath the other layers, mask out the centre, and insert a fill layer of #4db1eb before clipping it to the gradient. Mask so that only the sphere shows on each layer.



Mask further

08 You will still need to erase a lot from the tree image. It's likely that the tree will leave unwanted white pixels around the branches and there's the rest of the greenery in the picture to mask out too. Pay close attention to this, otherwise you will lose realism in the image.



Liquify

09 Once your tree's selected, Ctrl/Right-click the mask, apply it and head to Filter>Liquify. Use the Forward Warp tool to distort the tree; create a curved trunk that looks like it's grown around the inside of a sphere. Elements users: use Cmd/Ctrl+T to Transform and Warp.



Add the roots

10 Images of dead trees make great roots. Insert one and go to Image>Adjustments>Threshold to convert to black and white, before hitting Cmd/Ctrl+T to Transform and Warp into position over the soil.



Insert the robins

11 Add a little more colour into the picture by inserting the robin images provided, masking them from their backgrounds and placing on the branches of the tree. Use the supplied actions to brighten them up and give them a redder tint.



Brush in the snow

12 Now to add the snow: create new layers above the rest of the bauble's elements and beneath the soil and grass. Scatter snow with the supplied brushes; be subtle for the upper level, but be creative with the lower one.

storemags.com



Make basic adjustments

13 Step back for a second to assess how your bauble is shaping up. At this point, you might want to brighten it up with a clipped curves layer – supplied as an action – or you might wish to add some vibrancy to the picture.



Create a subtle reflection

14 Duplicate your 'Inside the bauble' group and merge it as one layer. Go to Filter>Distort>Spherize and then click OK. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to Transform it and place it over the original bauble. Set to Soft Light, 15% Opacity for slight reflection.



Add a lens flare

15 Create a new layer and fill with black. Go to Filter>Lighting Effects>Lens Flare and add a flare before using Cmd/Ctrl+T to Transform and place it with more precision. Use Hue/Saturation (Cmd/Ctrl+U) to recolour it for effect.



Finish off

16 To finish, add some subtle adjustments to the picture, such as Curves and Vibrance – we've supplied an action to create this in just a click. Duplicate your bauble and use the Gaussian Blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) to create background baubles too.

What you can do with it

Turn it into a greetings card

A bauble is the perfect decoration to place onto a greetings card. Choose File>New and select A4, then go to View>New Guide to cut the A4 document in half. Place your design on one side, before printing and folding, ready for you to write your message inside.

If you're creating a card for a friend or loved one, you might want to personalise the original design too; instead of adding the deer and the robins, you might want to place the recipient's favourite animal into the picture, or even an image of yourself looking festive.



CREATE CARDS ONLINE
Use websites such as Vistaprint to turn your Photoshop work into greetings cards and gifts without the hassle of printing yourself.

Make a 3D chessboard

Learn to make 3D objects and combine them with 2D elements for creative projects

Photoshop 3D is a great way to add a new dimension to your composition. In this tutorial we'll show you how to create and work in the 3D space and then bring in 2D elements to make an incredible surreal scene. To create a 3D object in Photoshop we need to work with three different palettes simultaneously: the Layers palette, where you can place the images and create 3D objects; the 3D palette, where you have access to 3D controls, such as lights, cameras and 3D objects; and the Properties palette, where you can distort, extrude and twist the 3D objects, as well as apply different materials to create realistic images. Arrange the palettes side by side by going to Window>Workspace and choosing 3D to rearrange the Photoshop workspace. When working in the 3D environment use the Move tool (V) to select and move the images around. To quickly access the 3D object properties, click on the objects to activate the box controls or Ctrl/right-click to access the 3D properties.

Watch the latest video Search Photoshop Creative Magazine

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

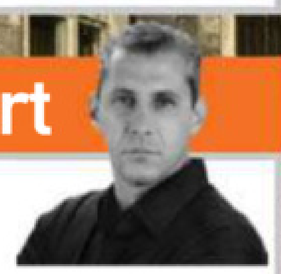
What you'll learn

- How to work in the 3D environment to create amazing compositions

Time taken

3 hours

Expert



Daniel Sinoca

"I love creating 3D objects in Photoshop and combining them with photos to create amazing compositions. I started to get involved in the digital world more than 10 years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides."

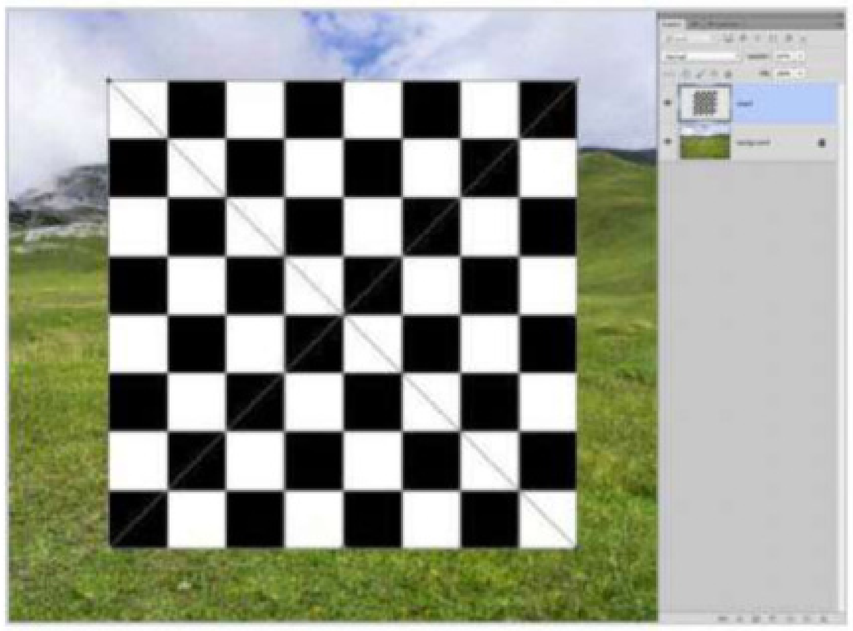
On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Expert tip

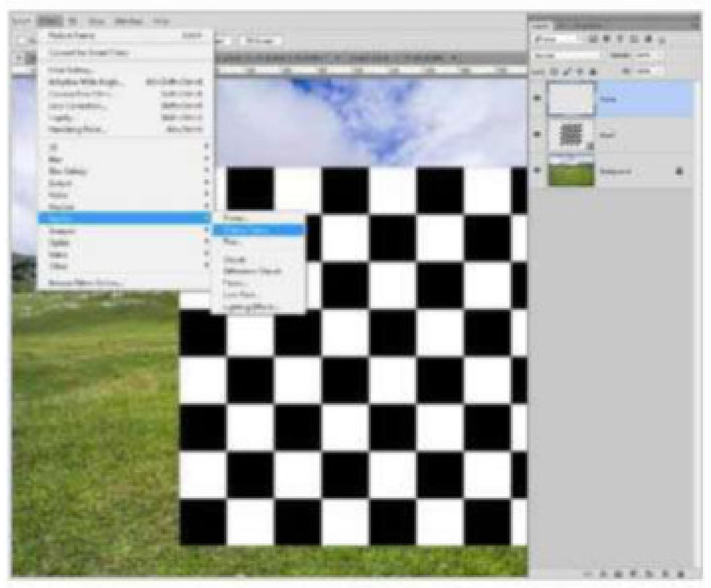
Optimise Photoshop

Working with 3D objects requires a fast computer, but there are a few steps you can take to get Photoshop running more efficiently. Go to Edit> Preference>Performance. If you're not surfing the web while using Photoshop, consider increasing the Memory Usage (RAM). Check 'Use Graphic Processor' and open Advanced Settings, set the Drawing mode to Advanced and enable 'Use Graphic Processor'. Open CL, Anti-alias Guides and Paths to increase performance.



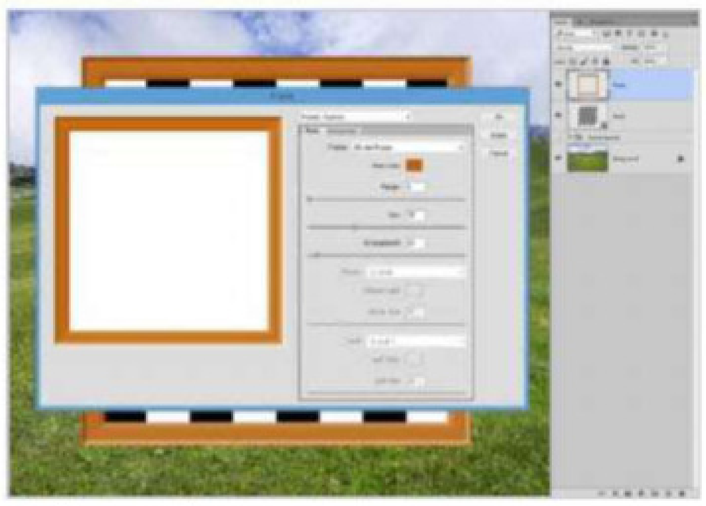
Create the chessboard

01 First let's set the stage. Go to File>Open> 'Background.jpg'. Now place the chessboard texture. Go to File>Place Embedded>'Board.jpg'. On the option bar set the Horizontal/Vertical scale to 50% and hit Return/Enter.



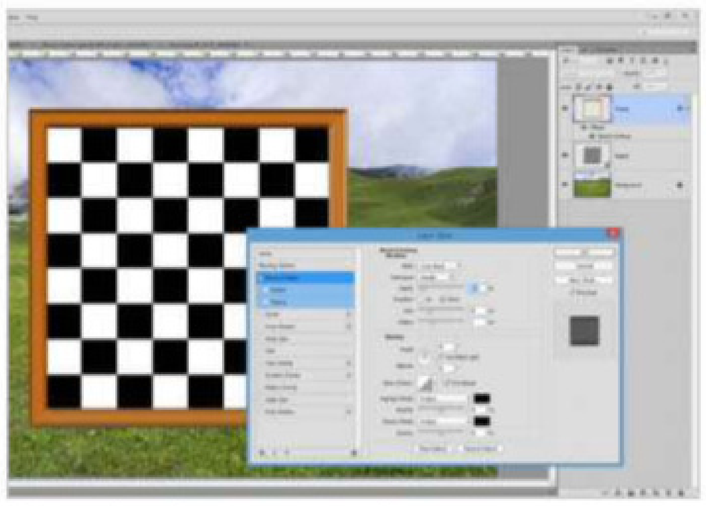
Add a frame

02 Hold Cmd/Ctrl and click on the Board layer thumbnail to select it. Now create a new layer. Go to Layer>New> Layer or hit Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N. Name it Frame and click OK. To add a frame go to Filter>Render>Picture Frame.



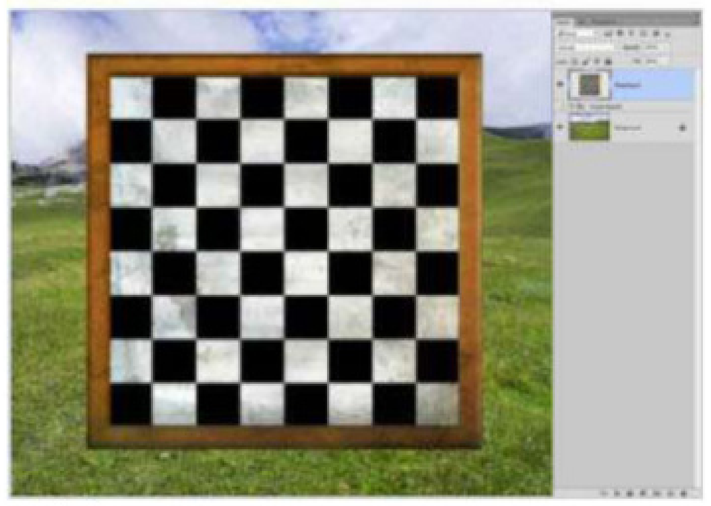
Adjust the settings

03 On the Frame window, choose Frame: 42 Art Frame, set the Vine Colour to a dark orange. Set the Margin to 1, Size: 30, Arrangement: 12. Now open the Advanced palette and set 'Number of Lines' to 10 and then hit OK. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize the frame.



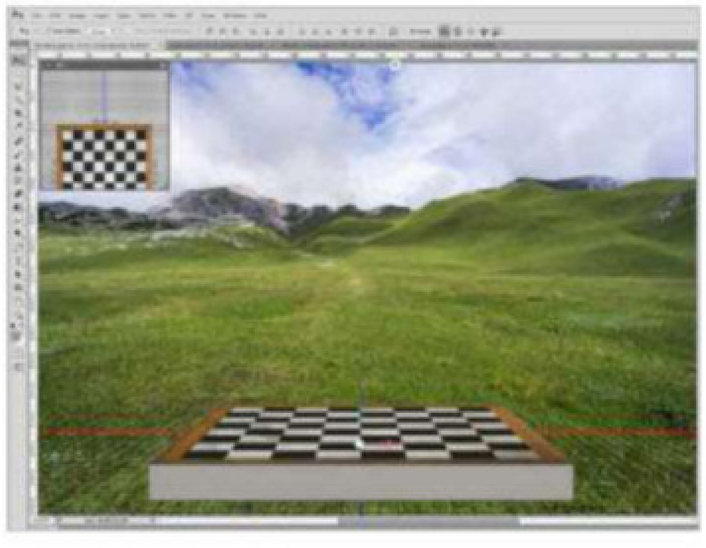
Set the Layer style

04 Go to Layer>Layer Style>Bevel & Emboss. Set Style to Inner Bevel, Technique: Smooth, Direction: Down, Size: 50 pixels and Soften: 50 pixels. Change the Angle to 90°, Altitude 50°. Set Gloss Contour to Linear, change the Highlight/Shadow Mode to Multiply, Colour: Black, Opacity 50%.



Add texture

05 Hold Shift and click on the Board layer. Now go to Layer>Merge layers or hit Cmd/Ctrl+E. Go to File>Place Embedded>'Texture.jpg'. Resize the image and hit OK. Change the blending mode for the layer to Multiply and then merge the layers again. Rename the layer Chessboard.



Create a 3D layer

06 Go to 3D>New>3D Extrusion from Selected Layer. In the Properties palette set the Extrusion Depth to 20mm and hit Enter. Still in the Properties palette, click on Coordinates, set the Rotation X to 90° and click 'Move to Ground'.



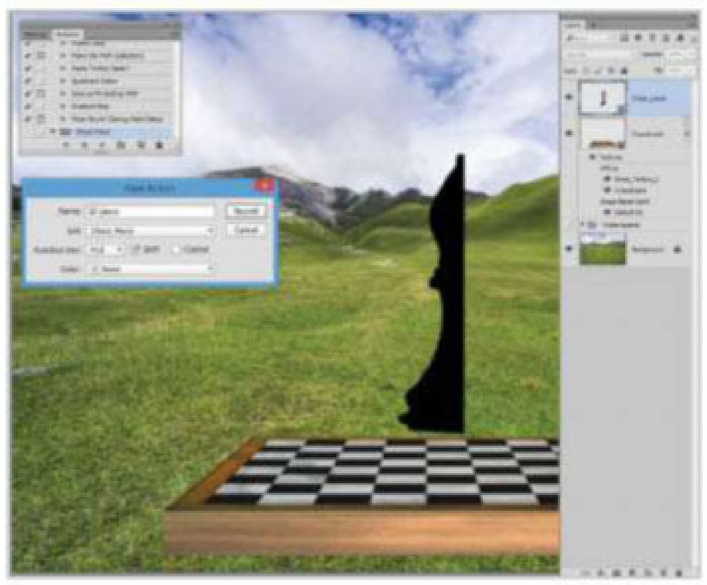
Edit textures

07 In the 3D palette select the Chessboard Extrusion Material. Go to Properties and click the Diffuse icon, choose Replace Texture, locate the 'Wood_ Texture2.jpg' and click Open. Set Shine to 20%, Reflection: 0, Roughness: 30%, Bump: 10%, Opacity: 100% and Refraction: 1.000.



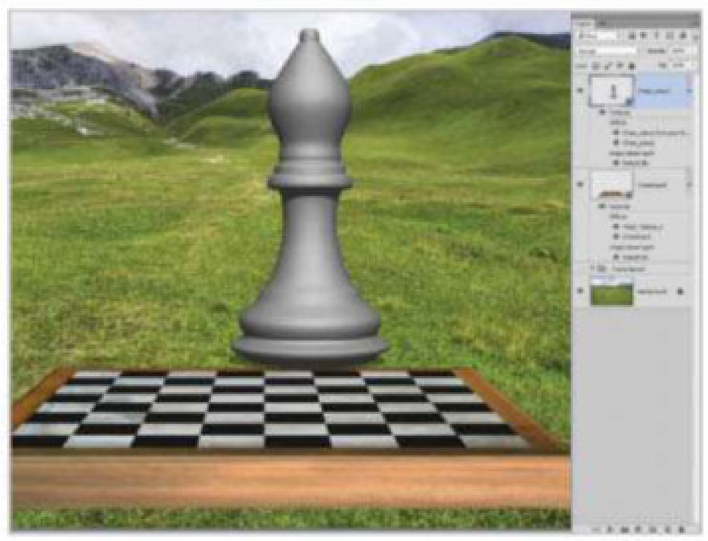
Create a chess piece

08 Go to File>Place Embedded>'Chess_ Piece1.png' and hit Enter. Now let´s record an action to speed up our work. Go to Window>Actions. In the Actions palette click on Create New Set button and name it Chess Piece. Click OK.



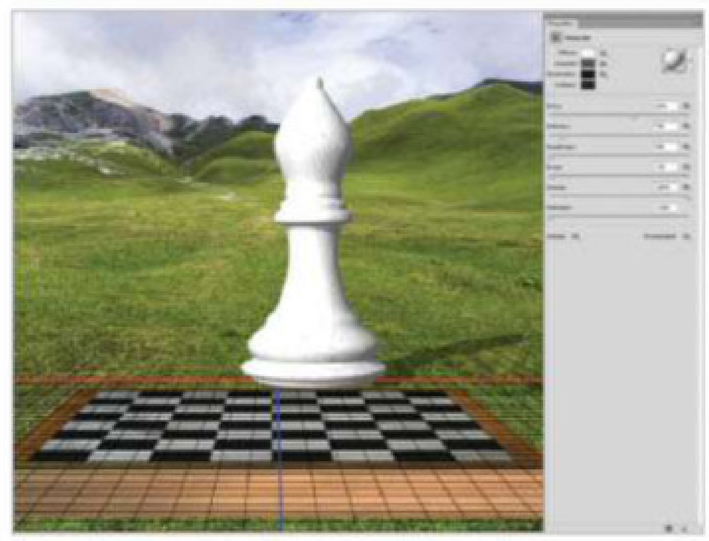
Duplicate and Emboss

09 Now let's assign a function key to our action and start recording. In the Actions palette, click Create New Action. On the New Action window, name it 3D Piece, choose Function Key: F12 and check Shift, then hit Record.



Do a 3D extrusion

10 Go to 3D>New 3D Extrusion from Selected layer. In the Properties palette set the Extrusion Depth to 0mm and hit Return/Enter. Now open the Deform panel. Click on the top right Deformation Axis, check Bend and set the Horizontal Angle (X) to 360°. Click to stop recording the action.



Apply materials

11 In the 3D palette, click on the Chess piece Extrusion Material. Now in the Properties palette, click on the Presets window and then choose the Stone Marble. Set the Shine to: 60%, Reflection: 9%, Roughness: 0%, Bump: 1%, Opacity: 100% and Refraction: 1.000.



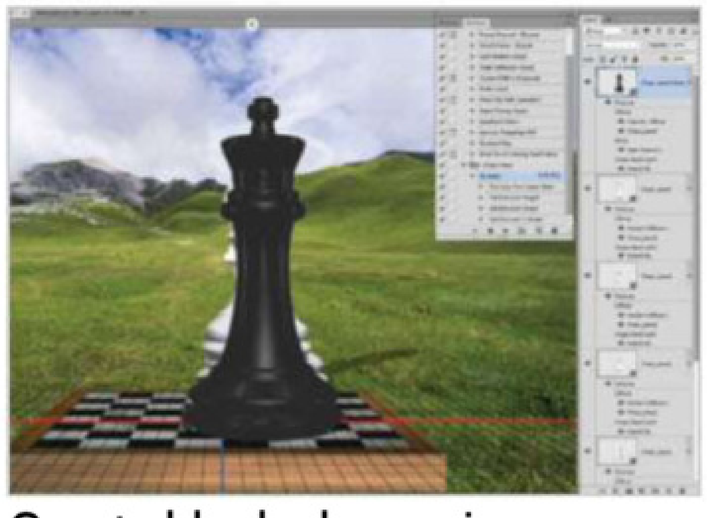
Edit UV properties

12 Let's edit the texture. In the Properties palette, open the Diffuse folder and select Edit UV Properties. Set the U/X and V/Y scale to 50%, Tile U/X and V/Y: 2, Offset U/X: -50%, V/Y: 0, check 'Apply to matching textures' and click OK.



Create more pieces

13 Hit F7 to open the Layers palette. Go to File>Place Embedded> 'Chess_piece2.png' and hit Return/Enter. Now apply the action. Hit Shift+F12 to transform the 3D piece. Repeat steps 11 and 12 to add the materials. Now place a few more chess pieces.



Create black chess pieces

14 Choose the chess pieces you want to add the new material to and go to Layer>Duplicate Layer. Rename and click OK. In the Properties palette, click the Presets window and choose Satin Black. Set Shine: 60%, Reflection: 9 %, Roughness: 0%, Bump: 1%, Opacity: 100% and Refraction: 1.000.



Merge 3D layers

15 Go to the Layers palette. Hold Shift and select all 3D layers then go to 3D>Merge 3D Layers. To improve the computer's performance you can merge each layer individually. Select the layer right above the Chessboard layer and hit Cmd/Ctrl+E, then select the next layer and repeat.

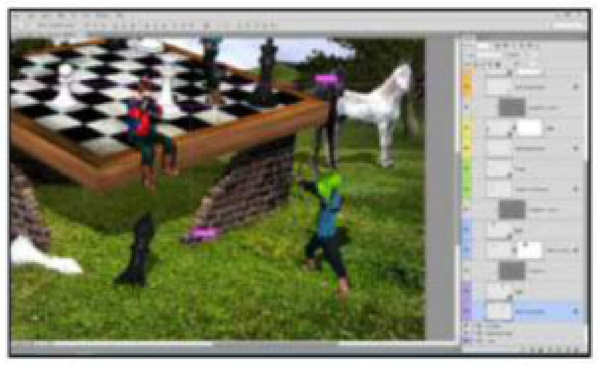


Scale the chess pieces

16 In the 3D palette, click on the Chess piece to select it. Go to the Properties palette, click on Coordinates and then click Scale: Dimensions or Percent. Check Scale and Uniform Scaling, set it to 30% and hit Return/Enter. Repeat this process for each chess piece.

Expert tip

Add layer masks



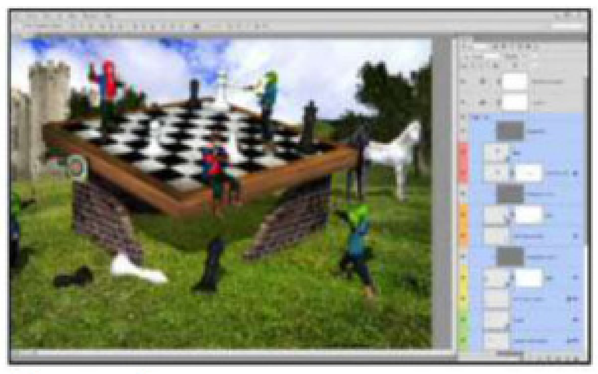
Hide unwanted areas

01 Add layer masks (Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All) to hide the character shadows over the chessboard edges and to blend the child's feet and the chess pieces on the grass.



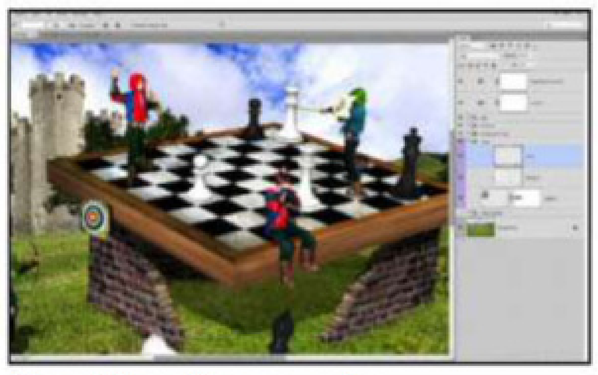
Dodge and Burn

02 Use the Dodge/Burn tools over a 50% neutral grey layer to enhance the light and dark areas of the images. Choose the appropriate range and a low exposure setting.



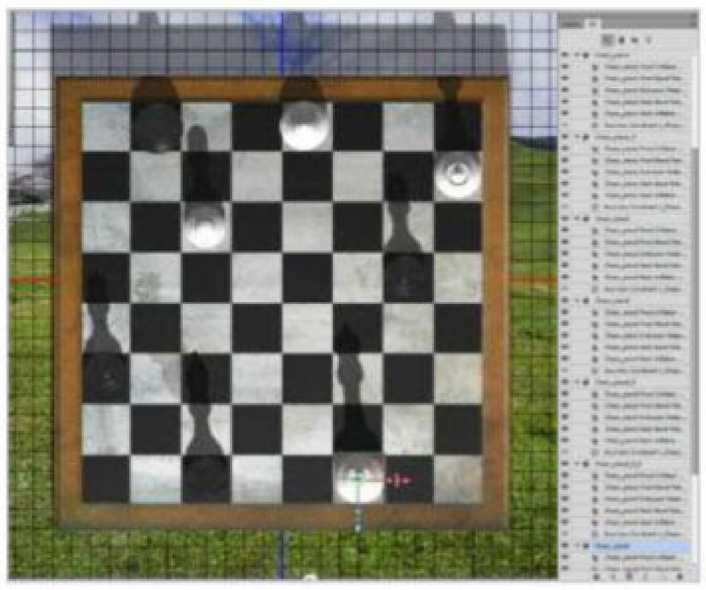
Group layers

03 Keep the Layers palette more organised by creating layer groups. Now hold the Shift key and select similar layers, then hit Cmd/Ctrl+G. Don't forget to rename the group.



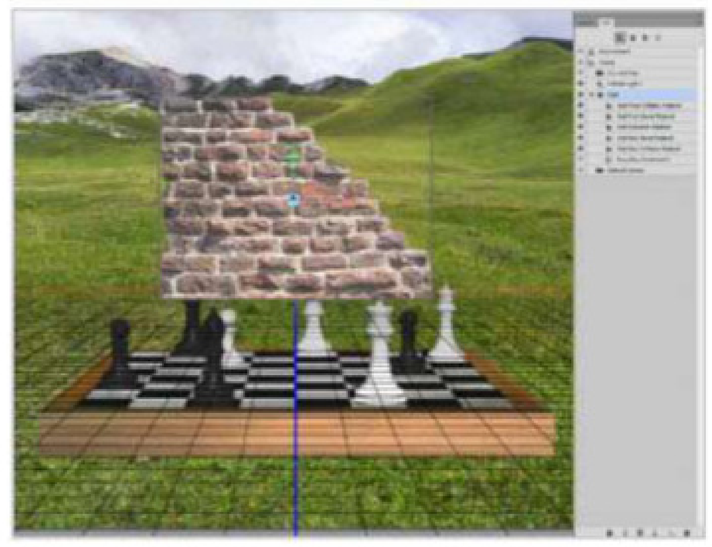
Use blending modes

04 Create a clipping layer over the Tower layer and change the blending mode to Colour. Choose a light yellow colour and paint the tower to create a yellowish effect.



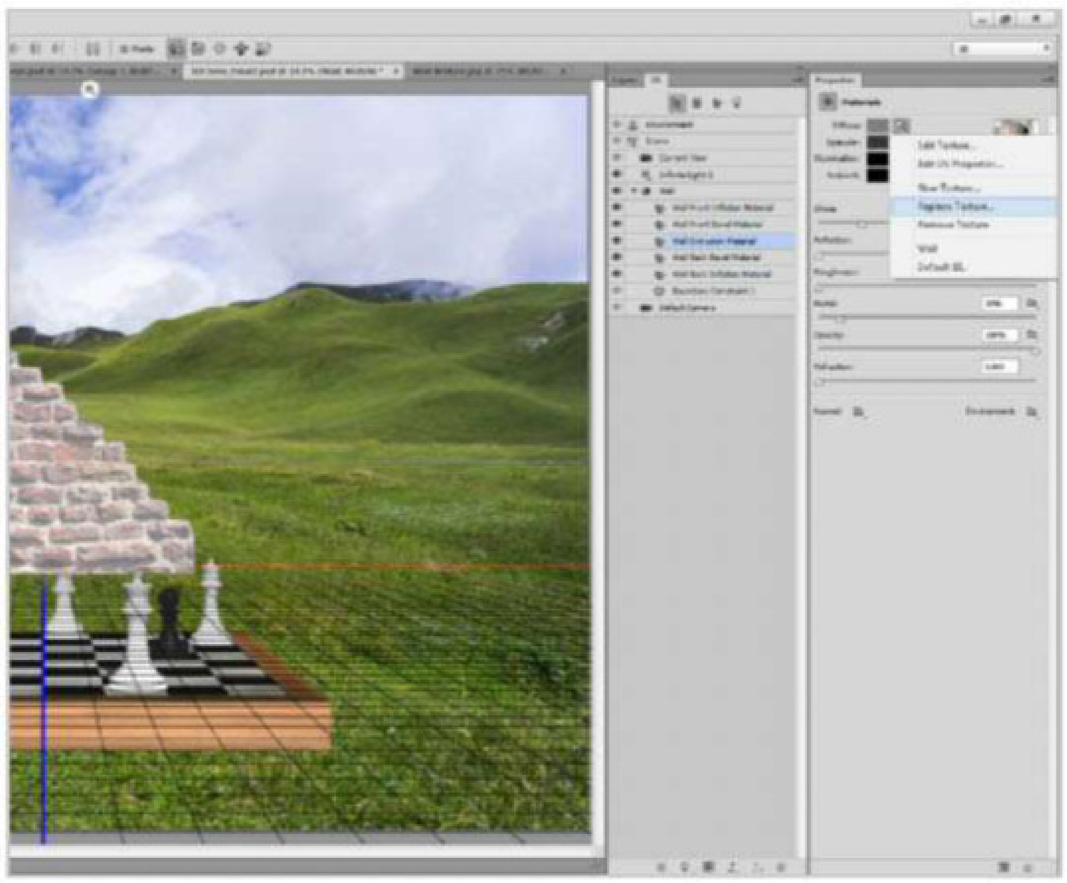
On-image controls

17 Position the mouse cursor over each chess piece to activate the on-image controls. Use the green, red and blue controls to move the pieces around the chessboard. Click on the arrow tip to move it up and down, sideways or back and forth.



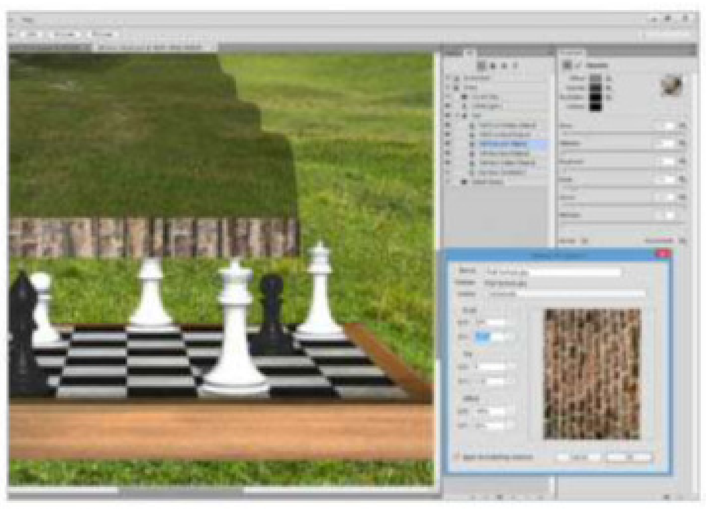
Create a 3D wall

18 Hit F7 and then head to File>Place Embedded 'Wall.png'. On the Options bar set the Horizontal/Vertical scale to 30% and hit Return/Enter. Now go to 3D>New 3D Extrusion from Selected layer. In the Properties palette set the Extrusion Depth to 15mm.



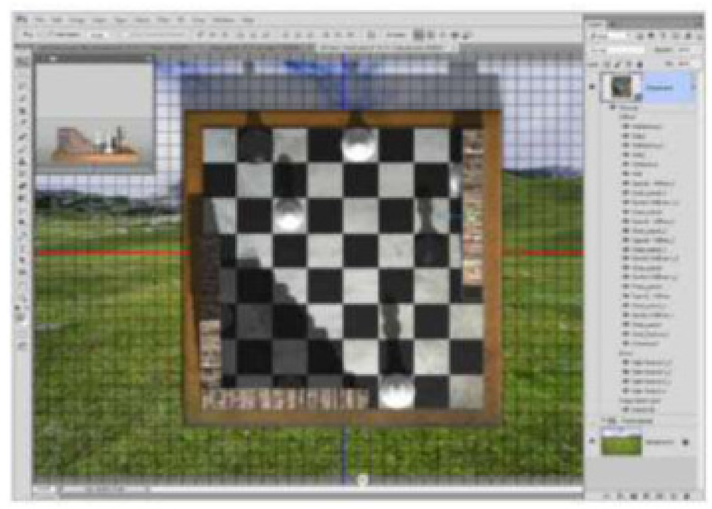
Add new material

19 Go to the 3D palette and select the Wall Extrusion Material. Then in the Properties click on the Diffuse folder and choose Replace Texture, now locate the 'Wall_Texture.jpg' and click Open. Next set Shine: 20%, Reflection: 0%, Roughness: 0%, Bump: 10%, Opacity: 100% and Refraction: 1.000.



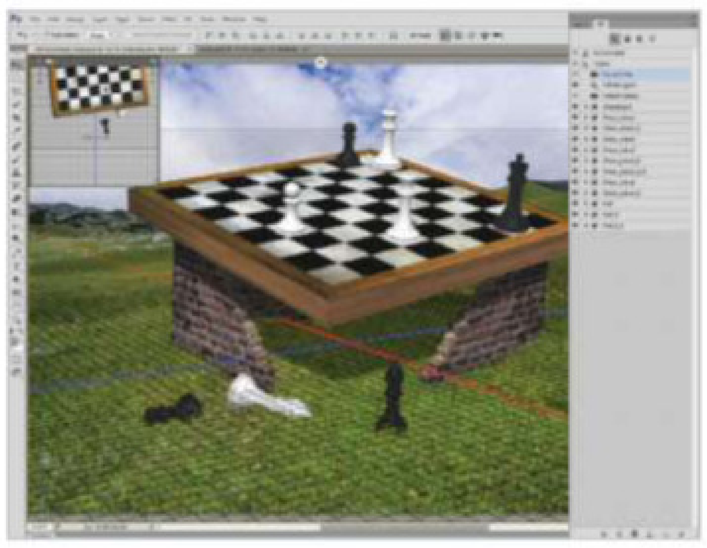
Edit the texture

20 Switch to the secondary view. In the Properties palette open the Diffuse folder and select Edit UV Properties. Set the U/X scale to 20%, V/Y scale: 540%, Tile U/X: 5, V/Y: 0.18, Offset U/X: -40% and V/Y: 60%. Check Apply to matching textures and then click OK.



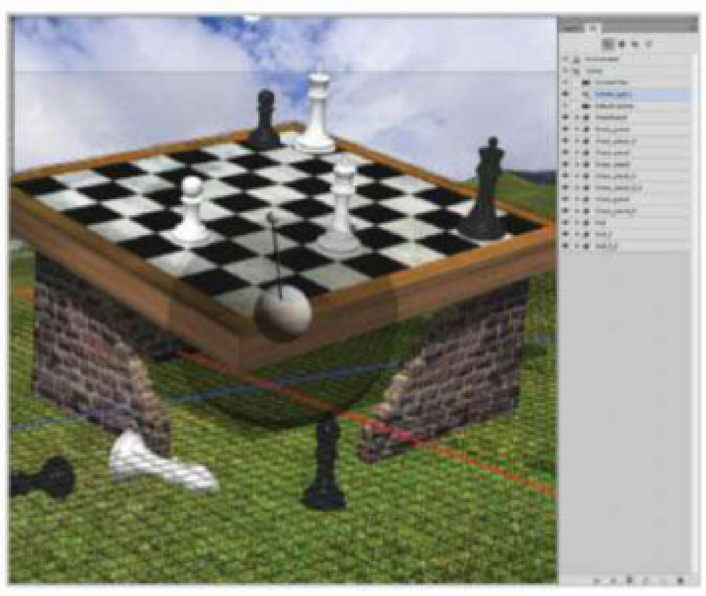
Merge layers

21 Switch to top view. Duplicate the Wall layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J). Hold Shift and select all 3D layers. Now hit Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge. Go to the 3D palette. Move the cursor over the 3D wall and use the on-image controls to rotate and place it next to the chessboard boarders.



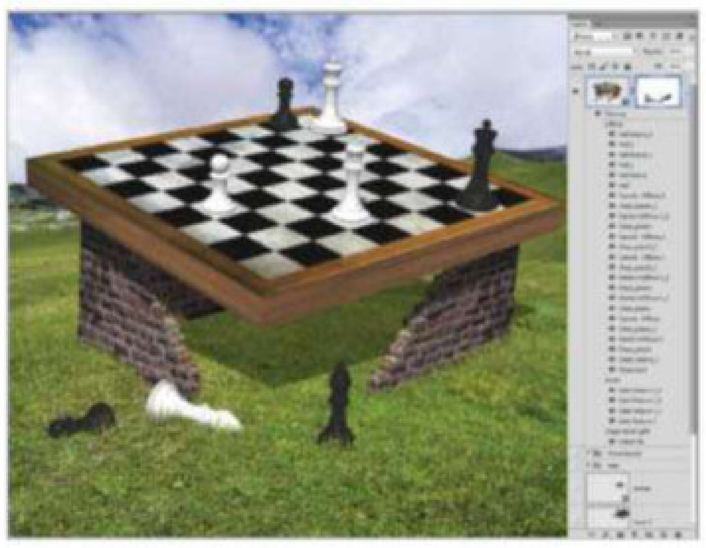
Rotate the 3D objects

22 In the 3D palette, hold Shift and select the chessboard and all of the chess pieces. Use the on-image control and drag it up, placing on top of the walls. Click on Current View then, using the Orbit 3D Camera, rotate the 3D objects to create a nice perspective.



Adjust the light

23 In the 3D palette click 'Infinite Light1'. Go to the Properties palette and set the Intensity to 80%. Now click on Coordinates and set the X Rotation Angle to 1°, Y to 55° and Z to -26°. Now create the final render, by going to 3D>Render.



Create a layer mask

24 Go to the Layers palette (F7). Select the Chessboard layer. Now go to Layer>Layer Mask Reveal All. Grab the Brush tool (B) and hit F5. Click on Brush Presets and open the menu at the top right. Select Load>'Grass.abr'. Hit F5 again, pick a grass brush and paint the bottom of the walls.



Add 2D elements

25 Go to File>Place Embedded 'Kid1.png'. Scale and hit Return/Enter. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow. Set the Opacity to 60% and Distance to 20px, then click OK. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Create Layer. Select the Drop Shadow layer and Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T. Drag to adjust perspective.



Bring more images

26 Complete the composition. Add the horses, children and tower. Don't forget to add shadows to match the 3D light direction. To create a tree, add a new layer and then go to Filter>Render>Tree. Choose a tree, change the settings and hit OK. Add a layer mask to hide unwanted areas.



Use adjustment layers

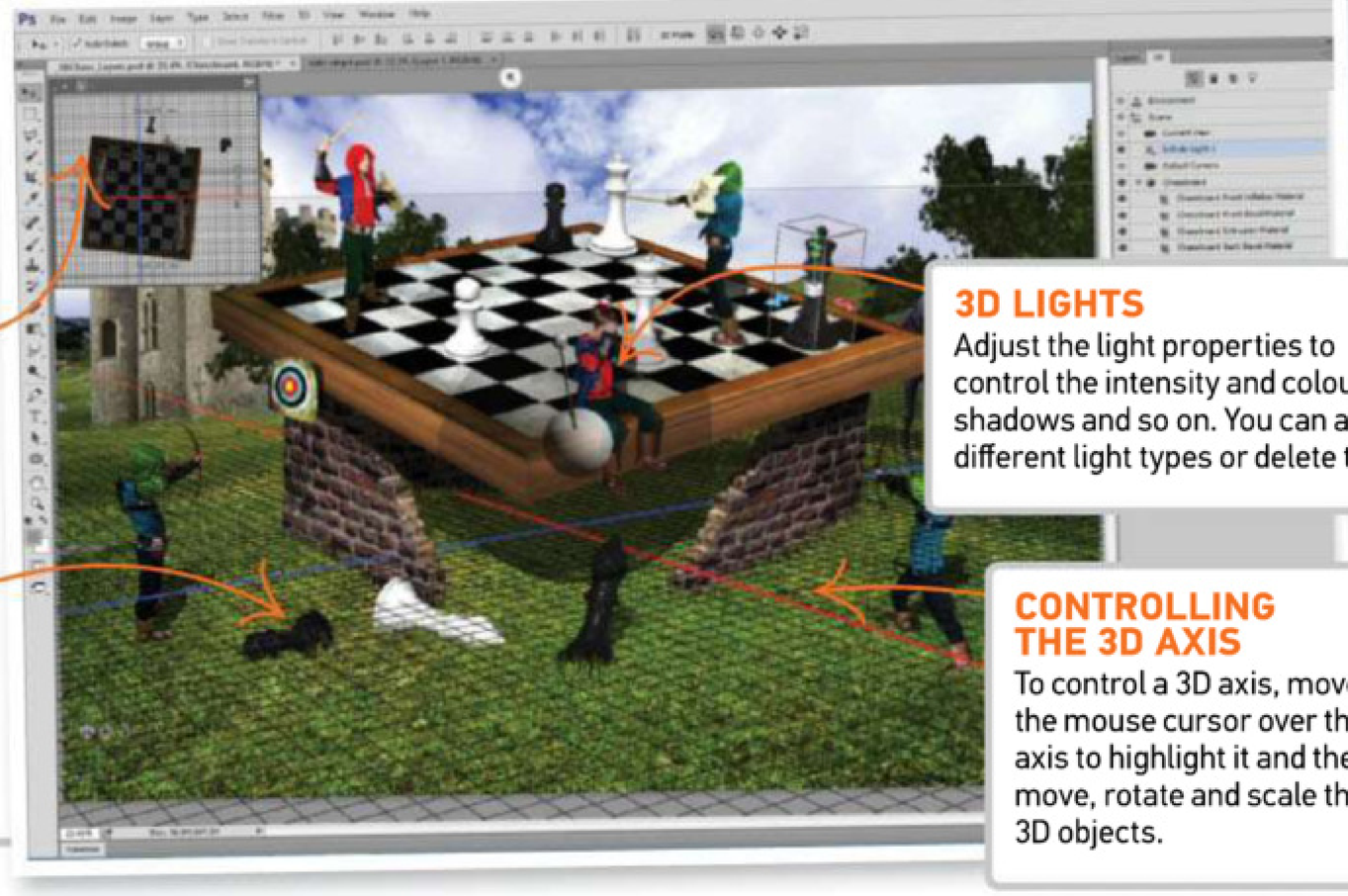
27 Now let's make some tonal corrections. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer> Levels. In the dialogue box, set the Input Levels to 0, 0.80 and 240. Now add the Brightness/Contrast Adjustment Layer. Set the Brightness to 0 and Contrast to 10.

Closer look

Working in 3D

ACCESS DIFFERENT VIEWS
On the secondary view window, you can click on the top-left camera icon to open the menu. Select a new view camera and swap between the main and the secondary view.

3D AXIS
The 3D axis appears when you select any 3D tool. It shows the X, Y and Z coordinates of a 3D object, cameras and light in the 3D space.



3D LIGHTS
Adjust the light properties to control the intensity and colour, cast shadows and so on. You can also add different light types or delete them.

CONTROLLING THE 3D AXIS
To control a 3D axis, move the mouse cursor over the axis to highlight it and then move, rotate and scale the 3D objects.

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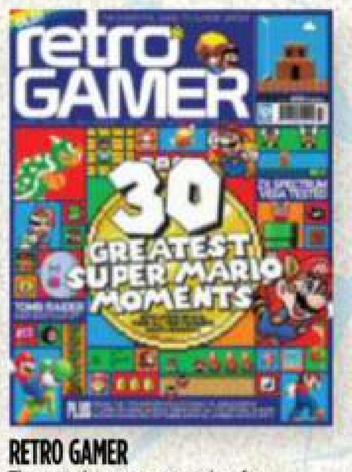
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Create an icy composite

Create an ice cube from scratch and construct this surreal ice scene

Photoshop enables us to create some fantastical and impossible scenes, but did you know, some species of frogs do actually freeze in winter and thaw out again in the spring? Obviously they are unconscious during the process and not peeping out of ice blocks to try and catch the odd passing fly, but where's the fun in that?!

When you are using photo elements from various sources to create a larger scene, you need to make sure that they all tie together cohesively. Adjustment layers, especially Photo Filters, are very useful for helping to achieve this and give the various elements in your artwork a common mood or colour scheme. We also need to keep an eye on perspective as it can be very jarring if one part of an image doesn't have the same perspective as the rest. Throughout the tutorial, feel free to Transform, Warp and Distort any elements as you see fit.

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

- Combine photos, selections, adjustment layers and layer masks

Time taken
2 hours

Expert



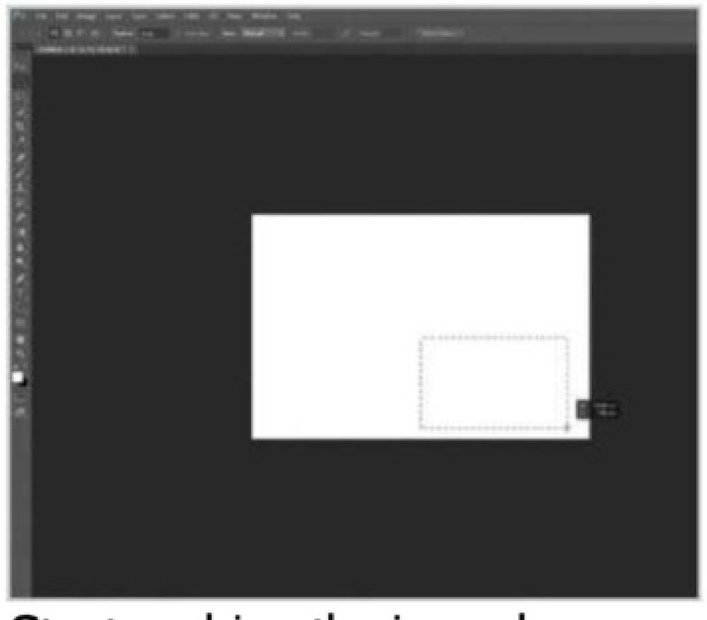
Sarah Cousens

"A key part of creating an image is sourcing the different elements and I'm always amazed at how many wonderful resources there are online. I am a freelance illustrator, designer and writer, and have been using Photoshop extensively since forming my own illustration and design company, Cool Surface, eight years ago."



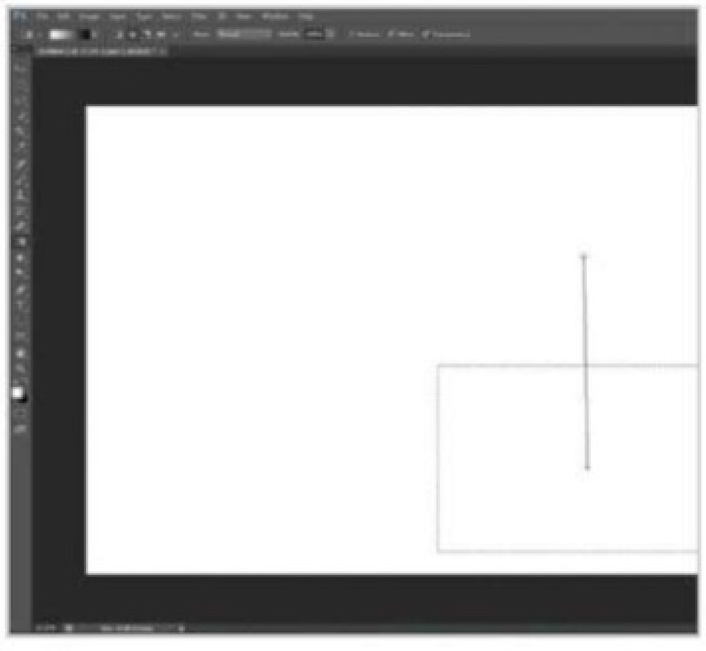
On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**



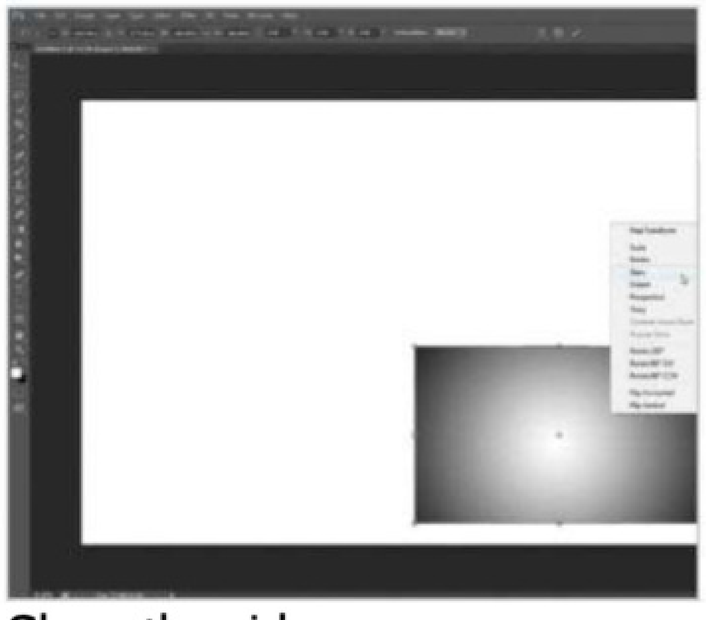
Start making the ice cube

01 Create a new file (Cmd/Ctrl+N) 300mm wide by 200mm high, 300dpi. Select the rectangular Marquee tool (press M) and use it to create a rectangular selection towards the bottom right of the canvas approximately 13cm wide by 8cm high. Add a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N).



Apply a gradient

02 Select the Gradient tool (G), set it to 'Foreground to Background' and Radial Gradient. Set the foreground colour to White and Background to Black. Click in the centre of the rectangle, drag upwards and release to apply a gradient as shown.



Skew the side

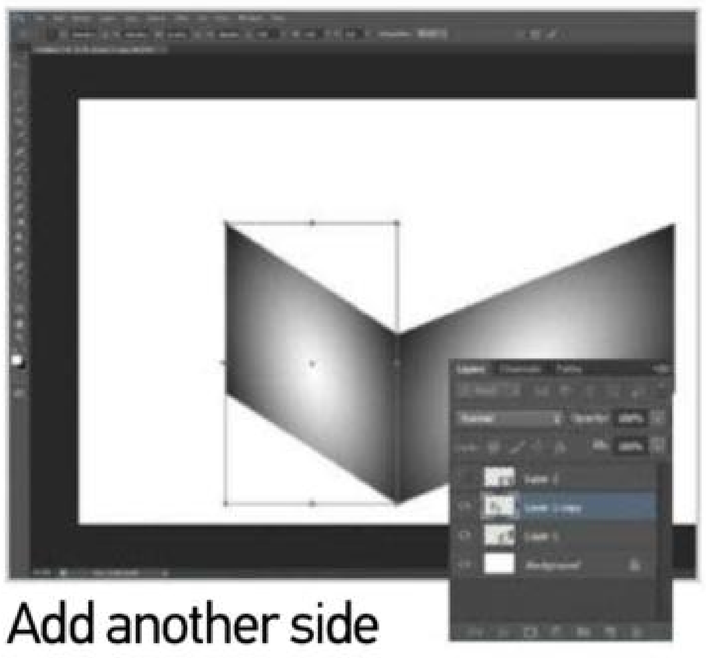
03 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer, hide the duplicate (click the eyeball icon next to the layer in the Layers palette). Back on Layer 1, press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click and choose Skew. Drag the right side of the rectangle upwards to -22 degrees. Hit Enter.

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Expert tip

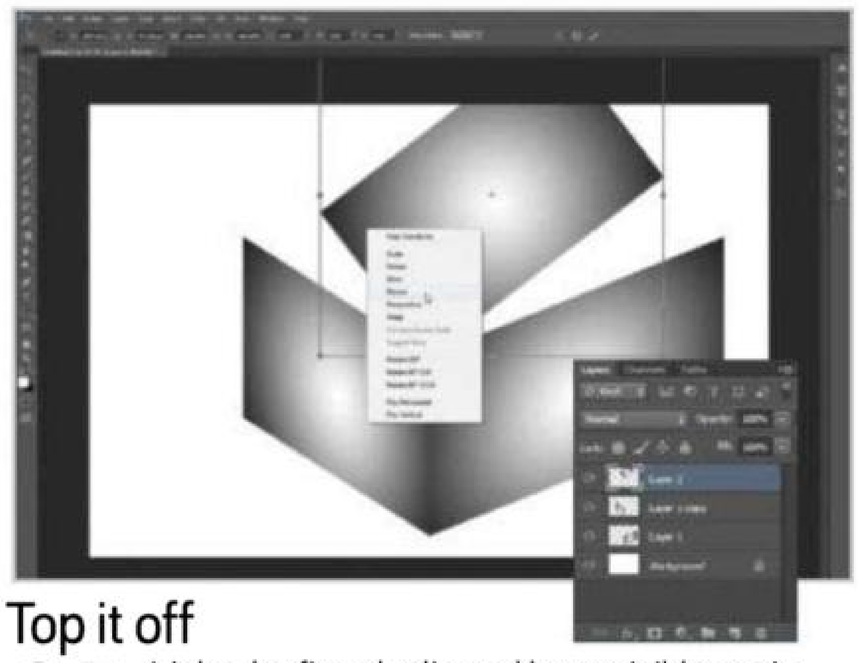
Set up your workspace

Having an appropriate workspace can help to increase your workflow dramatically. Go to Window> Workspace to choose a workspace and add different windows individually. In this tutorial, we are mainly combining different photos into one piece of artwork and applying different adjustment layers. For this reason, we have opted for the Essentials workspace and also added the Adjustments Window so that new adjustment layers can be added quickly and easily.



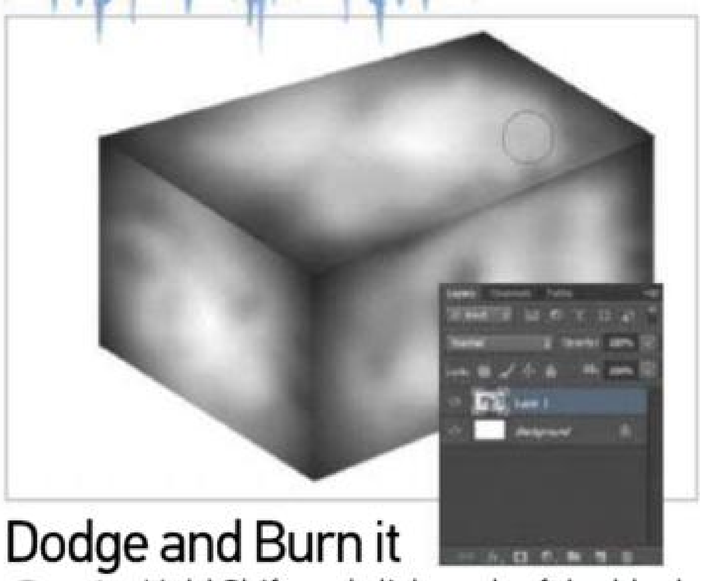
Add another side

04 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click and choose Flip Horizontal, then move the layer right so that it forms the left face of the block and then drag the left side of it inwards to reduce the width.



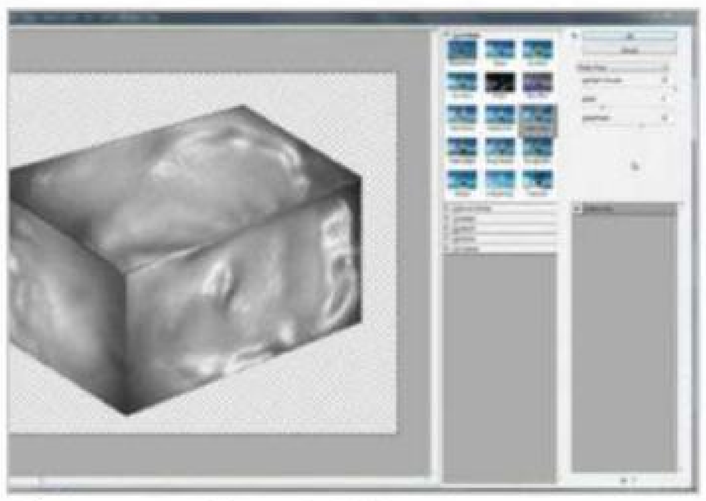
Top it off

05 Make the first duplicated layer visible again, press Cmd/Ctrl +T. Rotate and position it so the bottom-left corner lines up with the point where the two side pieces meet. Ctrl/right-click, choose Distort and drag the sides and corners to position it so it forms the top of the block.



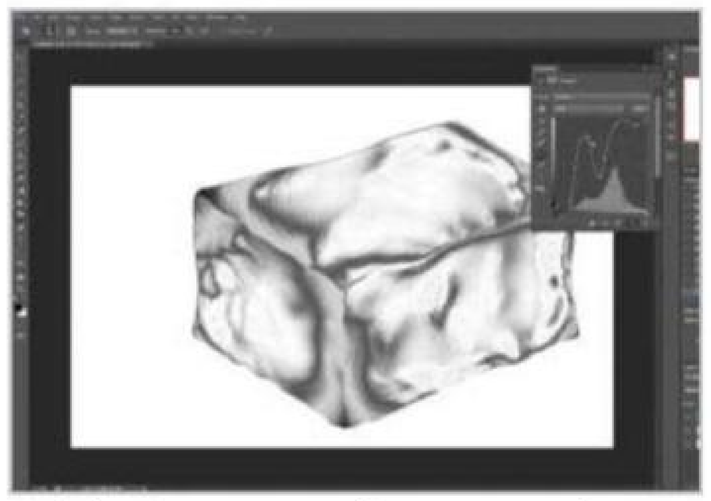
Dodge and Burn it

06 Hold Shift and click each of the block layers in the Layers palette, then press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge them all onto one layer. Use the Dodge and Burn tools to make the gradients much less uniform and create a more random and varied surface on the block.



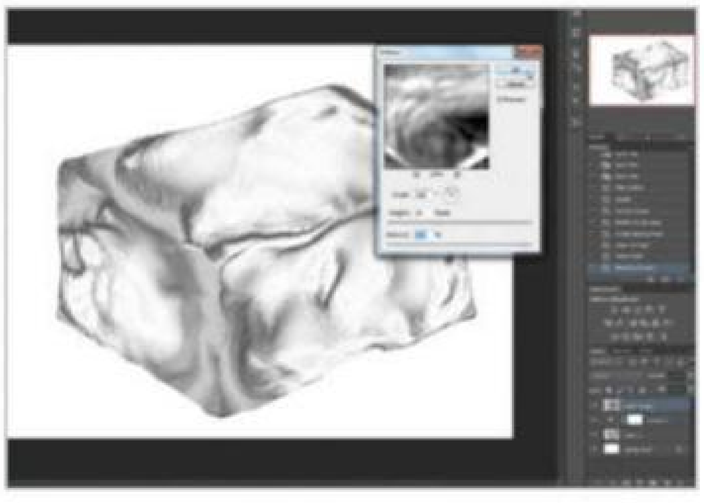
Choose Plastic Wrap

07 Go to Filter>Filter Gallery and choose the Plastic Wrap filter from the Artistic Filters set. Enter Highlight Strength: 20, Detail: 4, Smoothness: 10. Go to Filter> Liquify. Use the Forward Push tool to make the straight edges and sides of the block wobbly and to round off the corners.



Add a Curves adjustment layer

08 Add a Curves adjustment layer. Click and drag on various points along the Curve. Don't hold back; you want to achieve quite an extreme result, and a bit of experimenting and refining is needed until you have an effect similar to that shown in the screenshot.



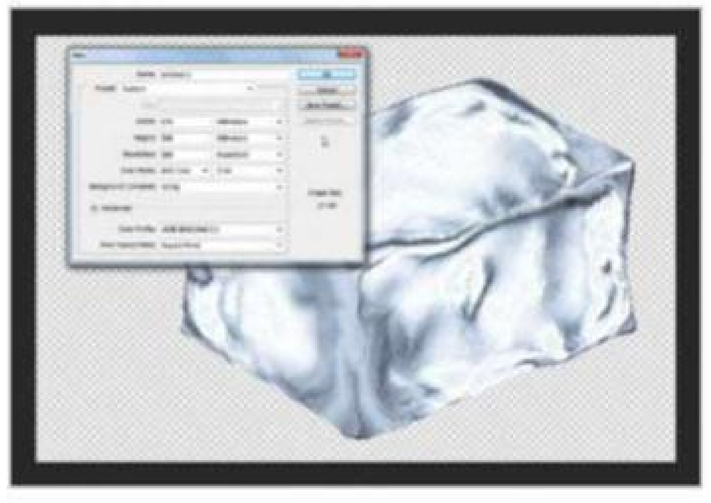
Duplicate and Emboss

09 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the block layer and move the duplicate to the top of the layer stack. Change its blending mode to Lighten. Go to Filter> Stylize>Emboss. Choose Angle: 128, Height: 35px, Amount 352% (this may vary depending on how your block looks). Click OK.



Add some texture

10 Open 'crystal.jpg'. Copy (Cmd/Ctrl+C) and paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V) it in, then position it to fully cover the block. Change its blending mode to Soft Light. Ctrl/right-click the thumbnail of the embossed layer to select its contents, then apply a layer mask to the ice texture.



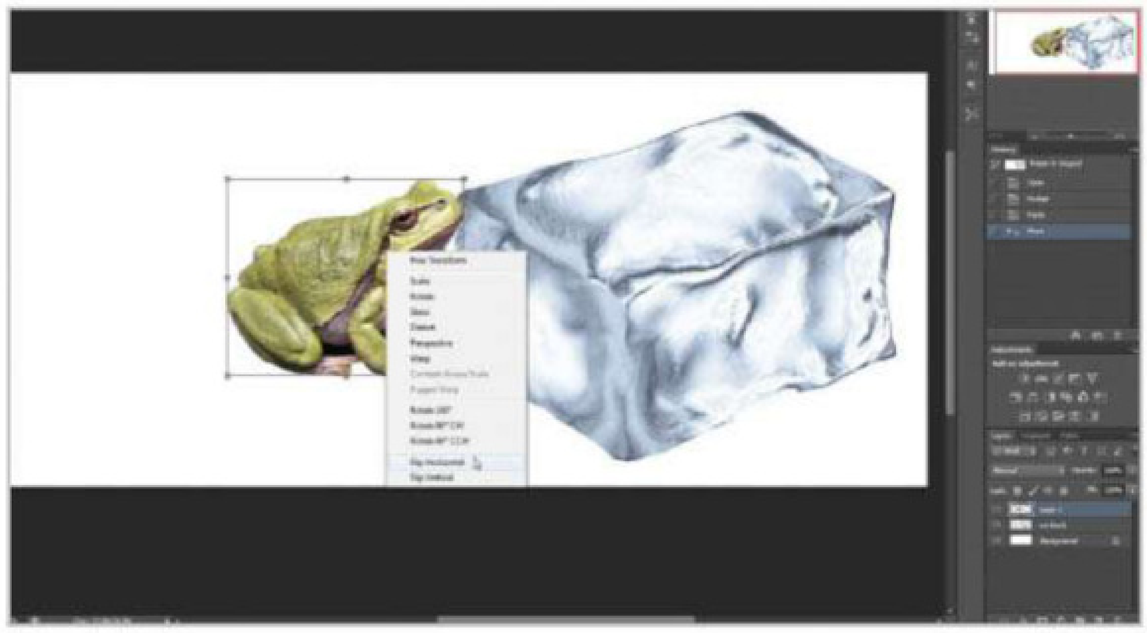
Create a new canvas

11 Add a Photo Filter adjustment layer, choose Cooling Filter (82). Change the layer's Opacity to 45%. Hide the white background layer, press Cmd/Ctrl+A then Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy from every layer. Create a new file 470mm wide, 200mm high and 300dpi, then paste in the ice block.



Select the frog

12 Open 'frog.jpg' and use the Quick Selection tool to select the frog. Press Q to switch to Quick Mask mode and use the Brush tool with black and white to refine the selection where necessary. Press Q again to exit Quick Mask.



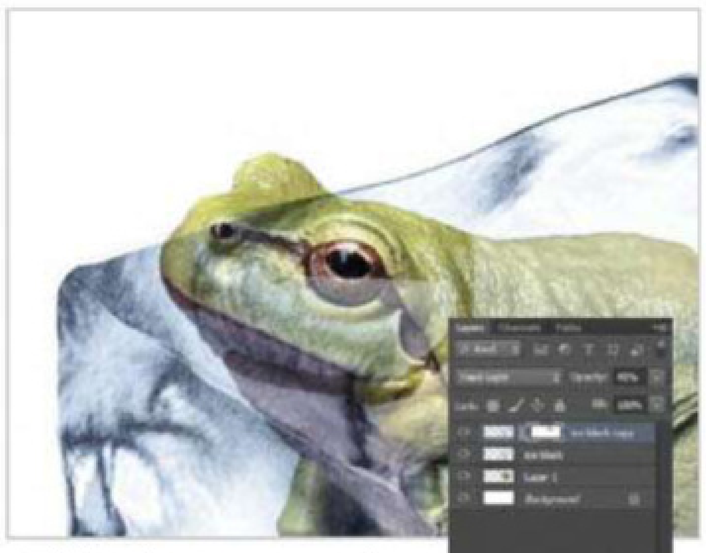
Paste in the frog

13 Go to Select>Refine Selection, enter Smoothness: 34 and set Output to: Selection. Click OK. Press Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy the frog and Cmd/Ctrl+V to paste it into your artwork. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click and choose Flip Horizontal. Reposition and re-size the frog over the ice block.



Change blending modes

14 Duplicate the ice block layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J), move both ice layers above the frog layer in the Layers palette. Change the lower ice block layer's blending mode to Multiply and the upper ice layer's blending mode to Hard Light and Opacity to 45%.



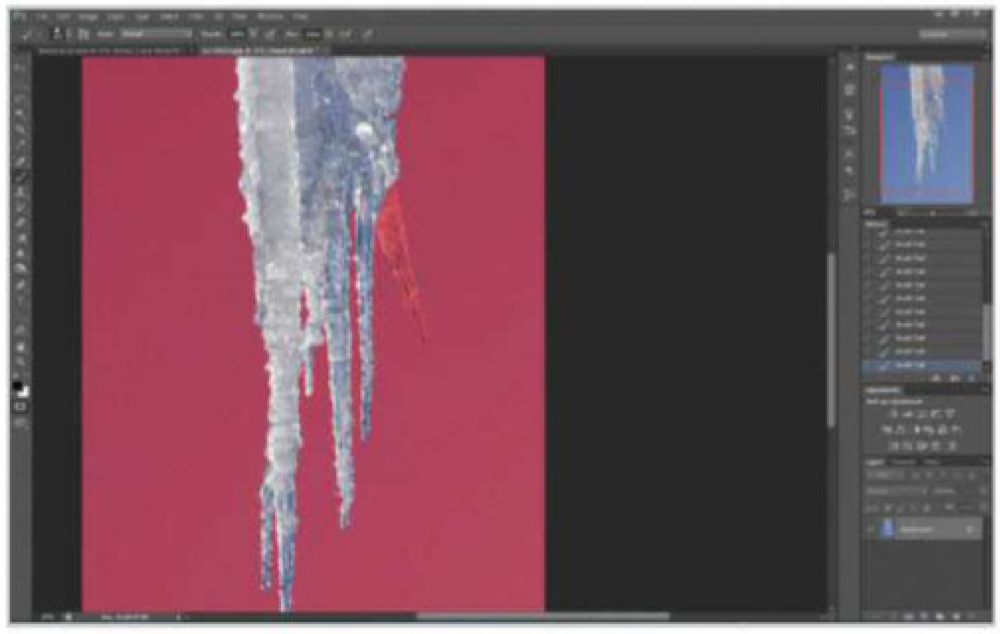
Add a layer mask

15 Add a layer mask to the top layer and use a black hard-edged brush to obscure the ice block from the frog's head. In the Layers palette, hold Option/Alt, and click and drag the layer's mask down onto the ice block layer below to duplicate it.



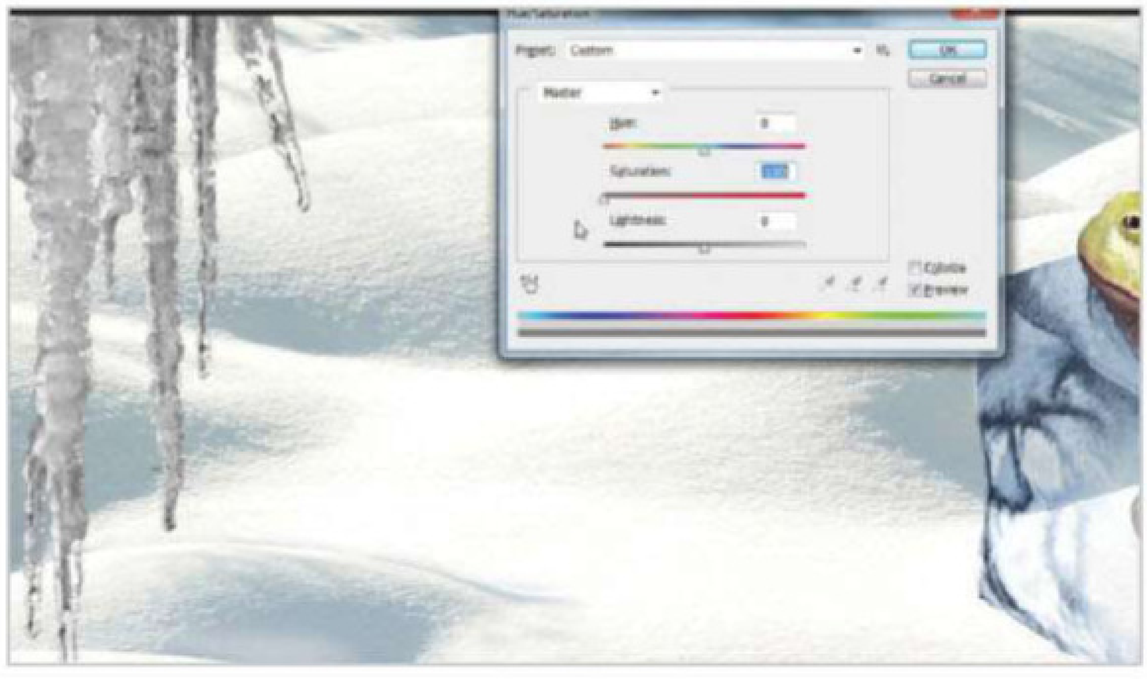
Let it snow

16 Open 'snow.jpg' and copy and paste it into your artwork at the bottom of the layer stack. Re-size it to fit the canvas. Open 'ice.jpg' and use the Magic Wand tool to select the blue sky background. Invert the selection (Cmd/Ctrl+I).



Select the icicle

17 Press Q to switch to Quick Mask mode and use a white hard-edged brush to add the clear sections of the icicle to the selection. Use black to remove the rightmost icicle. Press Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy it and Cmd/Ctrl+V to paste it into your artwork directly above the snow layer.

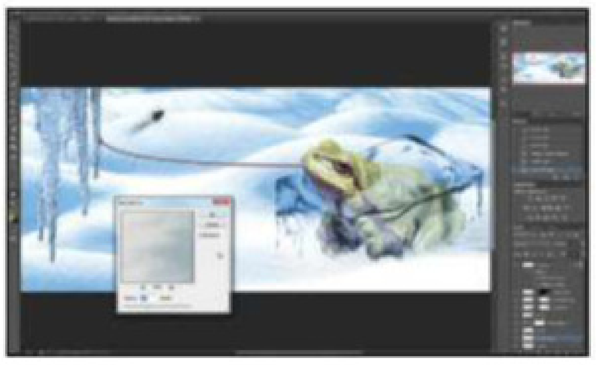


De-saturate

18 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and re-size and position the icicle to the left of the canvas. Press Cmd/Ctrl+U and reduce the Saturation to -100. Click OK. Add a Photo Filter adjustment layer, choose the Cooling Filter (82), and change its layer Opacity to 60% in the Layers palette.

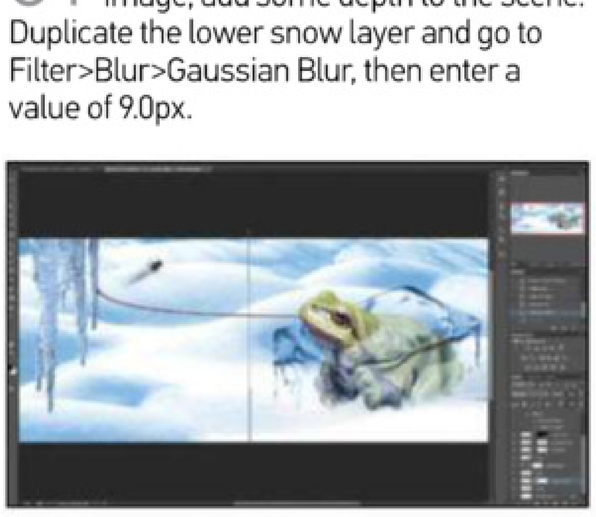
Expert edit

Enhancing the realism



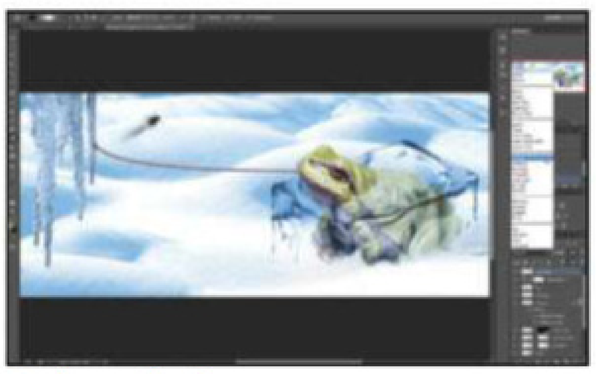
Add some depth

01 To enhance the realism of your image, add some depth to the scene. Duplicate the lower snow layer and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, then enter a value of 9.0px.



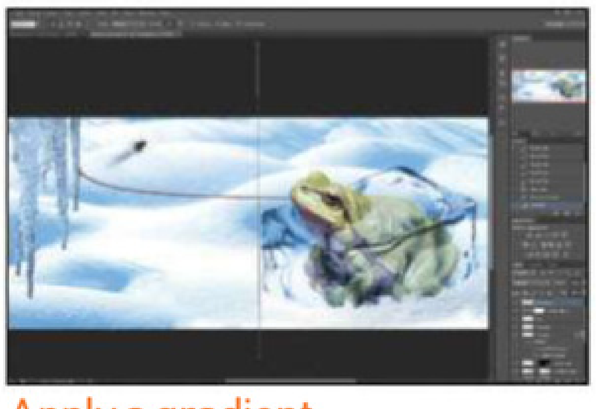
Fade out the blur

02 Now add a new layer mask to the blurred snow layer, select the Gradient tool set to Linear and Black, White. Click at the bottom of your image and then drag upwards.



Colour fade

03 Colours appear richer in the foreground and fade further away. To replicate this effect, add a new layer at the top of the layer stack with blending mode: Overlay.



Apply a gradient

04 Use the Gradient tool again with the same settings as before, but with 25% Opacity. Click and drag from the bottom of the image upwards.



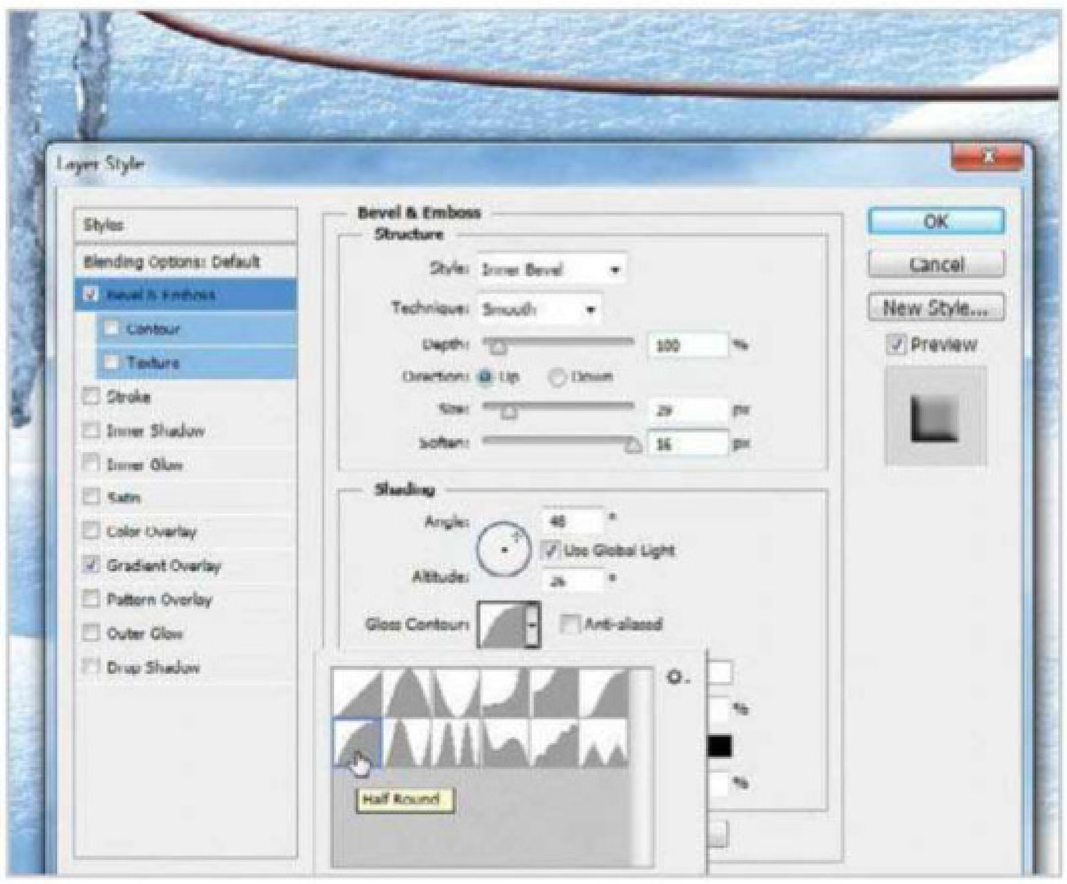
Create a Path

19 Create a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N) at the top of the layer stack and name it Tongue. Select the Pen tool, set to Paths, and click on the frog's mouth to add the first point, then click and drag downwards on the icicle to add the second point and create a curved Path.



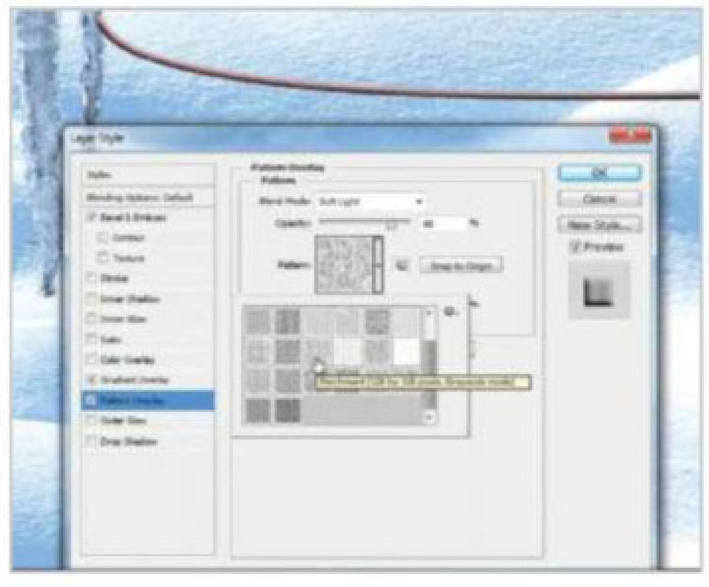
Stroke the Path

20 Select the Brush tool with a 30px round hard-edged brush and colour of R:110 G:55 B:61. At the bottom of the Path's palette click the 'Stroke Path with Brush' icon.



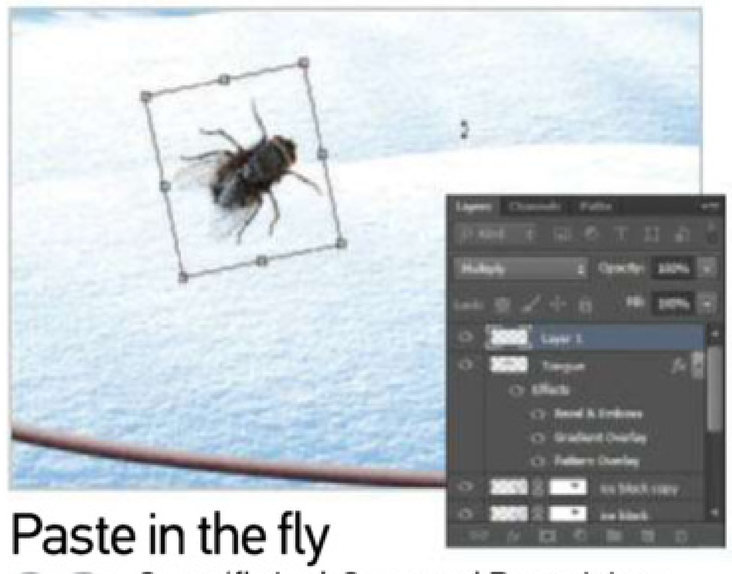
Bevel and Emboss

21 Click the 'Add a Layer Style' icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and choose Bevel and Emboss. Under Structure enter Style: Inner Bevel, Technique: Smooth, Size: 29px and Soften: 16px. Under Shading, enter Angle: 48 degrees, Altitude: 26 degrees and Gloss Contour: Half Round.



Tick Pattern Overlay

22 Next tick Pattern Overlay and choose the Parchment texture with blend mode: Soft Light and Opacity at 80%. Click OK. Use the Brush tool to edit the ends of the tongue and create the wider tip shape.



Paste in the fly

23 Open 'fly.jpg'. Copy and Paste it into your artwork at the top of the layer stack and name it Fly. Change the layer's blending mode to Multiply. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and re-size and reposition it. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate it and move the copy below the fly layer.



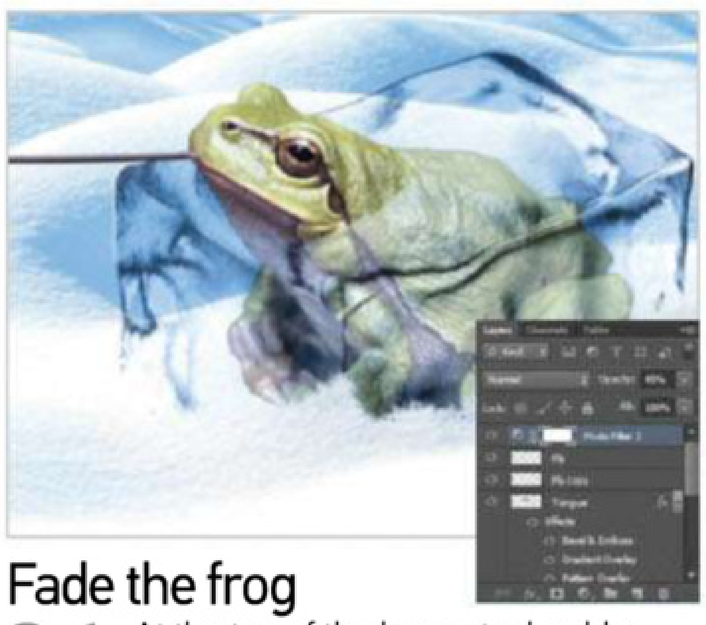
Blur and Warp

24 Go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur, enter Angle: 45 degrees and Distance: 194px. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and move it left so it is behind the fly. Ctrl/right-click, choose Warp and drag the corners and handles to give the blurred fly a curved shape. Change its layer Opacity to 60%.



Add more snow

25 Duplicate the Snow layer, move it above the ice blocks in the Layers palette. Hold Option/Alt and click the 'Add Vector Mask' icon. Use the Brush tool with a white Spatter brush (in Photoshop's default brushes) to bring back some of the snow around the bottom of the ice block.



Fade the frog

26 At the top of the layer stack add a Photo Filter adjustment layer, choose Cooling Filter (82), reduce its layer Opacity to 45%. Add a layer mask to the frog and use a black airbrush at 20% Opacity to fade him slightly beneath the ice block, especially towards the rear.



Paint a puddle

27 Add a new layer above the ice blocks and name it Water. Use a mid-grey, hard-edged brush to paint in a puddle of water, dribbling over the sides of the block. Hold Option/Alt, and click and drag the layer mask from the ice block layer onto the Water layer.



Plastic Wrap again

28 Use the Dodge tool in the middle areas of the grey, and Burn along the edges to achieve the effect shown. Apply a Plastic Wrap filter with the same settings as before and change the layer's blending mode to Hard Light.

Elements users

Create the tongue

If you are using Elements to complete this tutorial, you won't have access to the Pen tool and will need to use a different method for creating the tongue in steps 21 and 22. After creating the new Tongue Layer, select the Line tool. Make sure it is set to Pixels and choose a weight of 30px. Select a colour of R:110 G:55 B:61 then click and drag from the icicle to the frog's mouth to create a line. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click and choose Warp. Click and drag the handles to create a curved shape, especially on the left end of the tongue.





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Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

Combine photos and illustrations to create an eye-catching composition

Time taken

2 hours

Expert



Daniel Sinoca

"I enjoy working with mixed-media compositions, because it gives me the freedom to use blending modes and other techniques to create exclusive digital masterpieces. I started to get involved in the digital world more than 10 years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides."

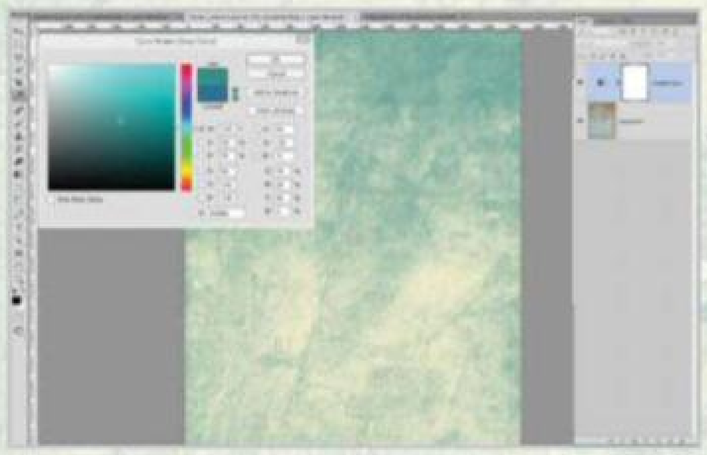


Combine photos and illustrations

Combine photos and illustrations using blending modes to create a unique piece of digital art

Combining real-life photographs with a cartoon drawing or vector image is a great way to polish your Photoshop skills. In this tutorial, we're mixing some swirly, decorative illustrations with a photo of a beautiful woman. We'll start by using basic tools such as the Quick Selection tool to create masks, and the Gradient tool to add a pleasing colour effect. We'll then get down to the business of superimposing the images with the help of blending modes, and use adjustment layers to make colour corrections and create interesting effects.

You'll practise using your own creativity to colour the image and add your own finishing touches. If you're using only a mouse to paint, don't forget to adjust the Opacity and Flow; this will give you more control over the strokes. Check the Expert Tip for more advice on this. The Expert Edit shows how to create your own flourishing design using the Pen tool. We've provided the illustrations, background image and start photo on the FileSilo, so you just need to download them and follow these easy steps to learn new techniques to apply in your own projects.



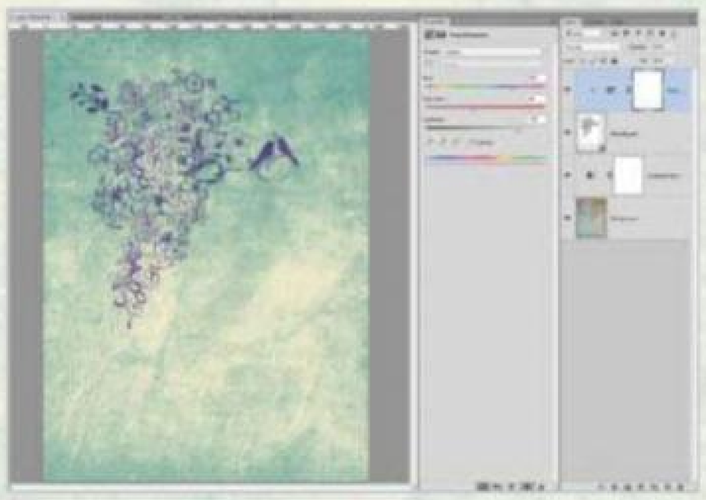
Quick adjustment

01 Open up 'Background.jpg' from the supplied resources. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Gradient Map and click OK. Click to edit the gradient. Set the first colour to #3c8d8a, Location: 20%, the second colour to #f3eccc, Location: 80% and hit OK.



Place the floral art

02 Go to File>Place 'Flourish_art.png'. On the Tool Option bar, set the Horizontal/Vertical scale to 80%. Drag the image to the top-left corner and hit Return/Enter. Now change the blending mode for the layer to Multiply.



Replace the colour

03 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Check 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and hit OK. Now check the Colorize box and set Hue to 265, Saturation to 40 and Lightness to 55.

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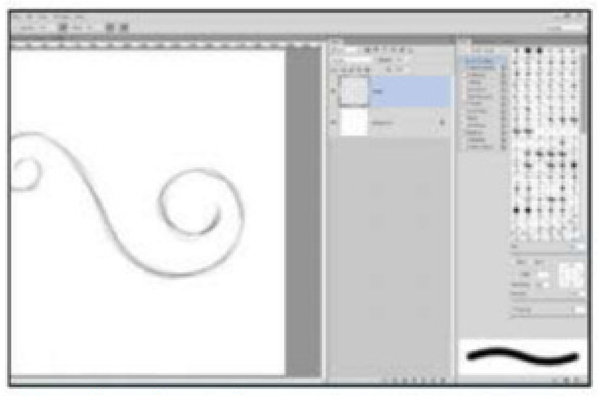
Expert edit

Create flourishes



Draw a sketch

01 Create a new document (Cmd/Ctrl+N). Then grab the Brush tool (B). Choose a hard-tip brush and draw a rough sketch of your flourish art to mark the path.



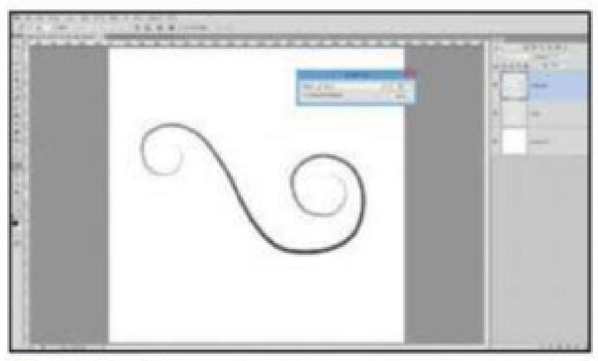
Set the brush

02 Hit F5 to open the Brush Tip Shape panel. Set the brush Size to 20px and Spacing: 1%. Now hit D on your keyboard to set the default Foreground/Background colours.



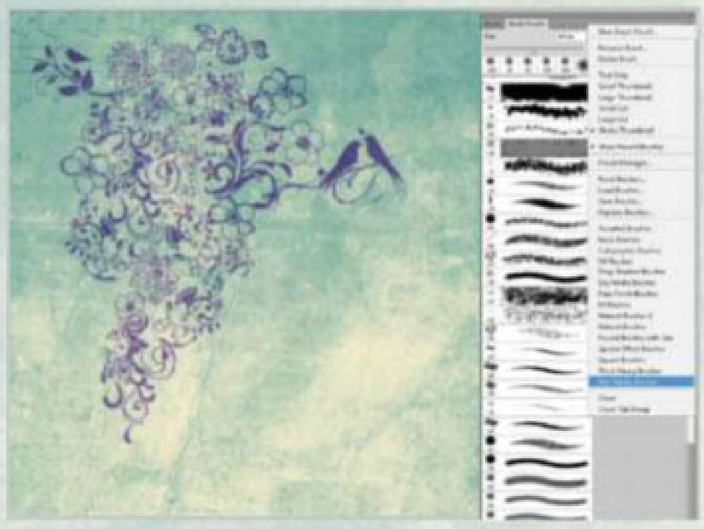
Use the Pen tool

03 Now go and grab the Pen tool (P), then click and drag outwards to set the anchor points. Use the Option/Alt or the Cmd/Ctrl keys to adjust the direction of the lines.



Create the stroke

04 Place the mouse cursor over an anchor point and Ctrl/right-click. Choose Stroke Path, check Simulate Pressure and hit OK. Ctrl/right-click again and choose Delete Path.



Choose your brushes

04 Go to Layer>New>Layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N). Name it Colour and drag it underneath the Flourish_art layer. Now grab the Brush tool (B). Hit F5 and click Brush Presets. Click onto the top-right corner arrow to open the drop-down menu. Select Wet Media Brushes, click Append.



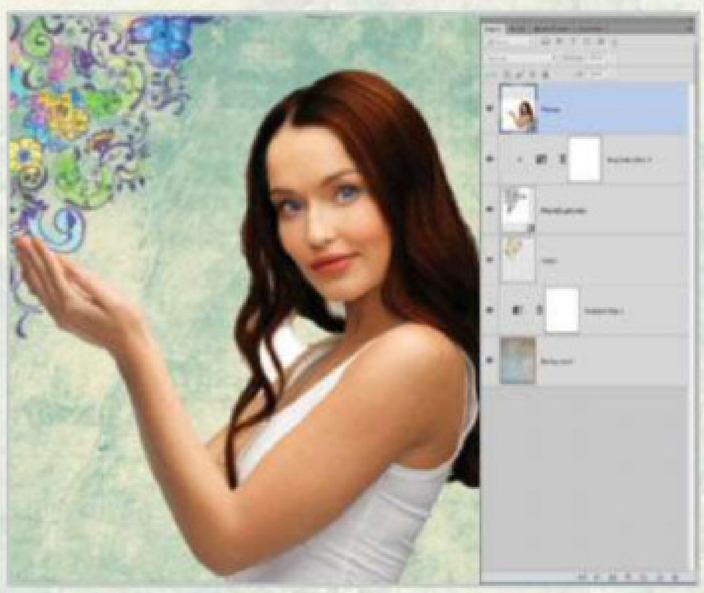
Select a colour

05 Go to Window>Swatches. On the Brush Presets palette choose the Watercolor Light Opacity brush 42. Use the Swatches and pick a vivid colour. Start painting the flowers and when you're happy, change the blend mode to Overlay.



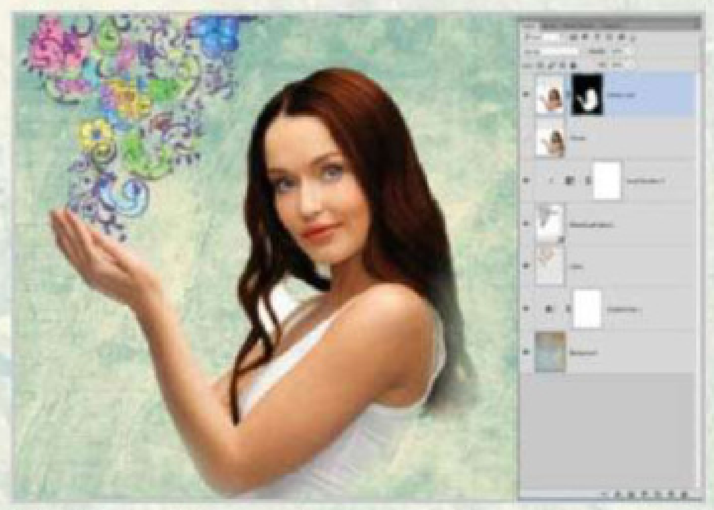
Place a new image

06 Go to File>Place 'Woman.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Drag the layer and place on top of the layer stack. Grab the Quick Selection tool (W). On the Tool Option bar, choose a hard-tip brush, size 70, check Auto-Enhance and then brush to select the woman.



Select Refine Edge

07 Now click Refine Edge. On the Refine Edge panel, set Smooth to 10, Shift Edge: -35%. Check Decontaminate Colors, Amount: 100% and choose Output to: New Layer with Layer Mask and click OK.



Soften the edges

08 First let's get rid of the hard edges on the bottom of the image. Hit D on your keyboard to set the default Background/Foreground colour. Then click over the layer mask and grab a soft-tip brush (B), size 250. Gently paint over the T-shirt and hair to soften the edges.



Correct the colour

09 Now we need to make a quick colour correction. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance. Check 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and hit OK. Set the Vibrance to +30 and the Saturation to –20.



Create a gradient

10 Create a new layer underneath the colour layer and name it Watercolour. Grab the Gradient tool (G). Next, open the Gradient Editor and choose the Yellow, Violet, Orange, Blue preset. Select Linear Gradient and drag from the top left to the bottom right. Change the blend mode to Multiply and set Opacity to 70%.



Use a layer mask

11 Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All. Set the Foreground colour to white. Grab the Brush tool (B) and hit F5. Choose the Spatter 24 brush and resize it to 300px. On the Tool Option bar set Opacity to 35%. Start painting diagonally around the woman to create the watercolour effect.



Add images to the hands

12 Go to File>Place 'Flourish3.jpg'. Change the blend mode to Multiply. Now drag the layer and place on top of the layer stack. Go to Layer>Rasterize>Smart Object. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+U, check Colorize and set Hue: 260, Saturation: 46, Lightness: 35 and click OK.



Create a layer mask

13 Place 'Flourish1.jpg' and 'Flourish2.jpg' and repeat step 12. Now create a mask for each layer and hide some areas to make the image appear as though it's slipping through her fingers.



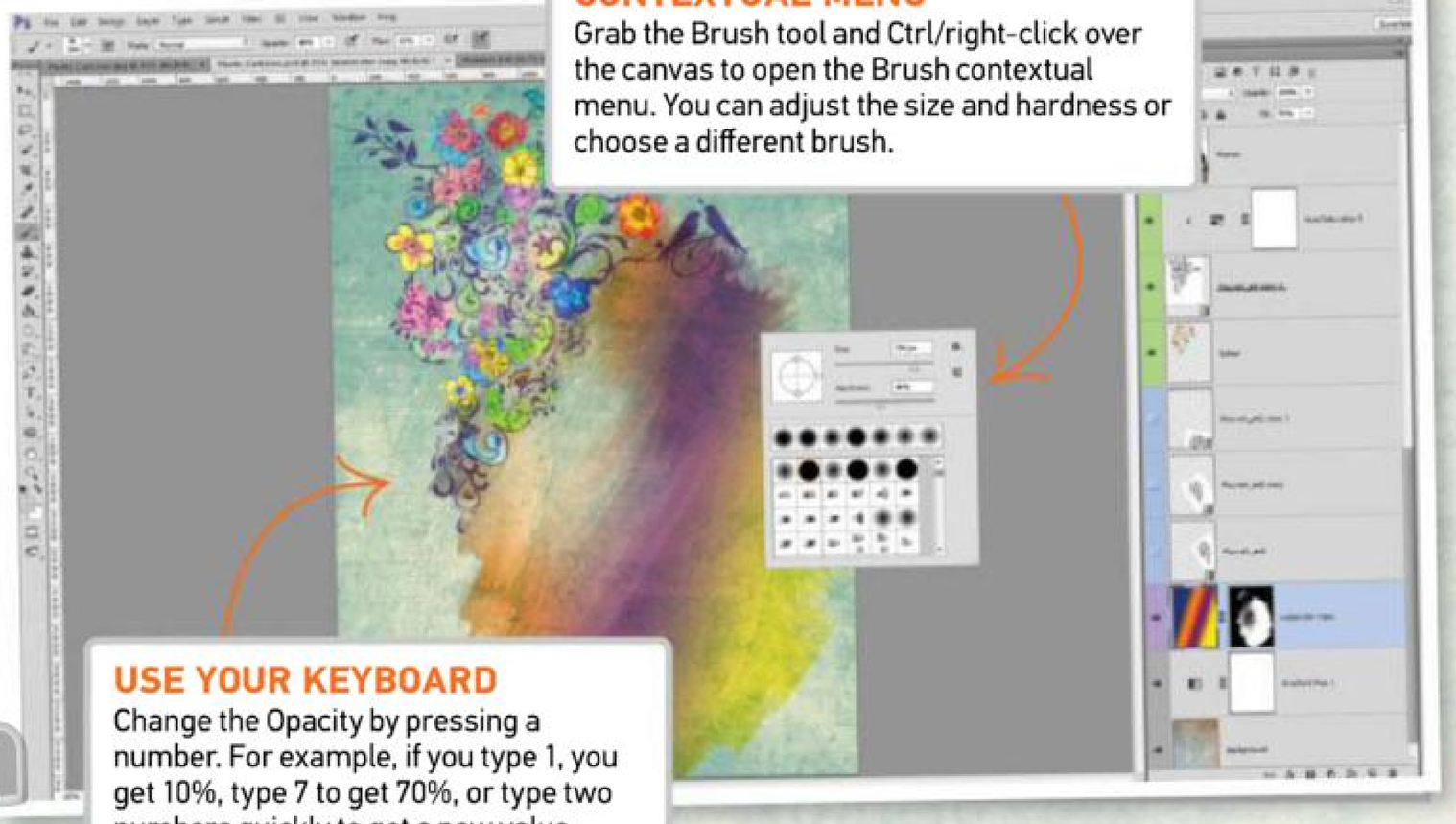
Add final touches

14 Place 'Flourish_Art2.jpg' underneath the colour layer. Change the blend mode to Multiply and set Fill to 70%. Resize, rotate and duplicate it (Cmd/Ctrl+T), positioning behind the woman. Place the 'hummingbirds.png' images and 'Flower.png', and change the blend mode to Luminosity.

Expert tip

Paint with the mouse

If you are using only a mouse to paint your digital art, the best way to control the strokes is to adjust the Opacity and Flow of your brush. Start with a low Opacity around 40% and set the Flow to 15%. Place the cursor over the image, click and hold as you drag to start painting, release the button and paint again to add an extra cover. Hold down Option/Alt, then Ctrl/right-click and drag left or right to decrease or increase the brush size. Move up or down to control the Hardness. Ctrl/right-click to access the contextual menu.



CONTEXTUAL MENU
Grab the Brush tool and Ctrl/right-click over the canvas to open the Brush contextual menu. You can adjust the size and hardness or choose a different brush.

USE YOUR KEYBOARD
Change the Opacity by pressing a number. For example, if you type 1, you get 10%, type 7 to get 70%, or type two numbers quickly to get a new value.

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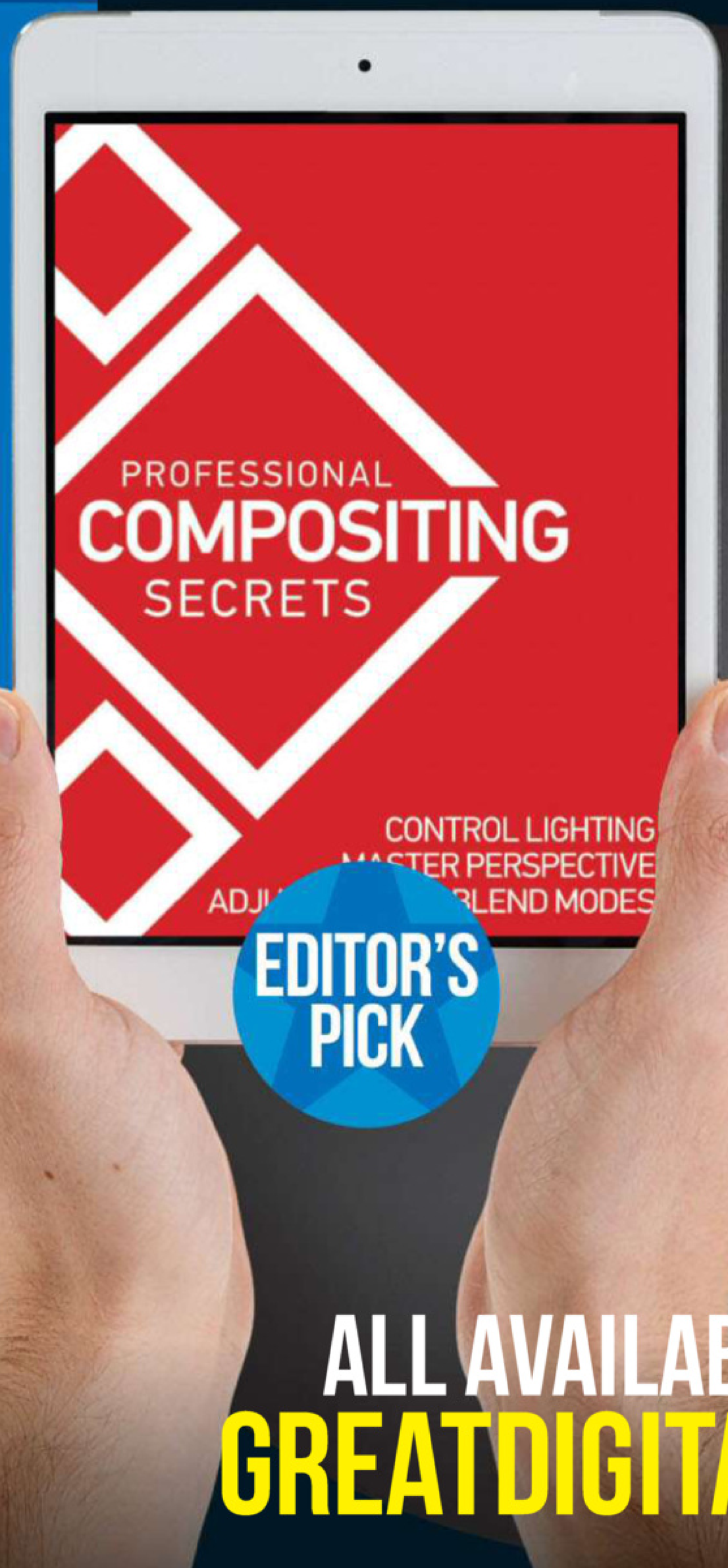
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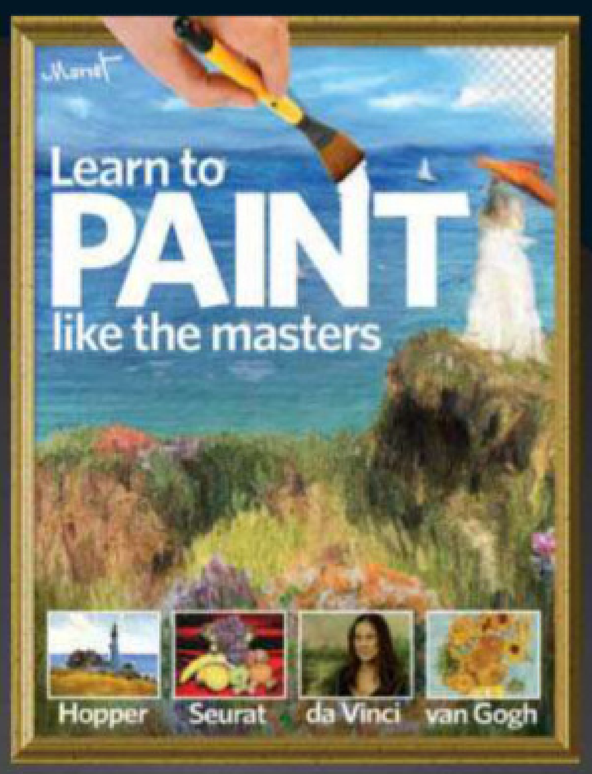


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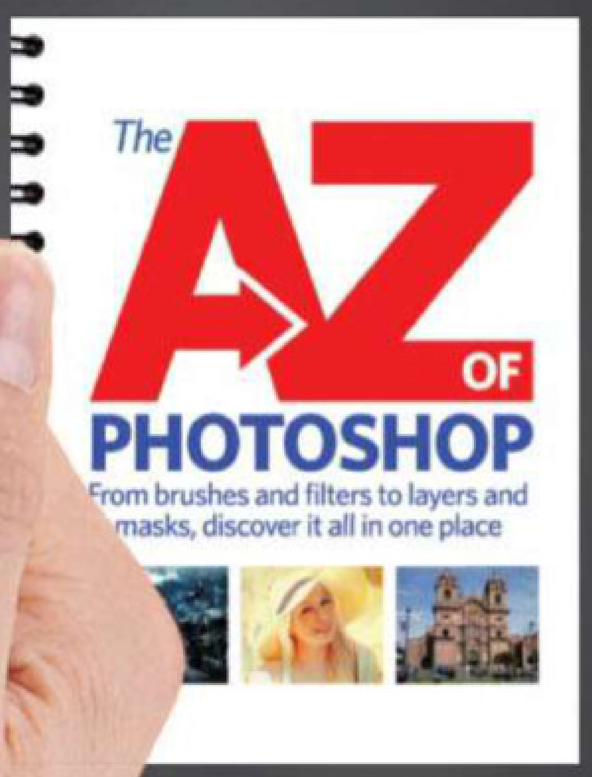
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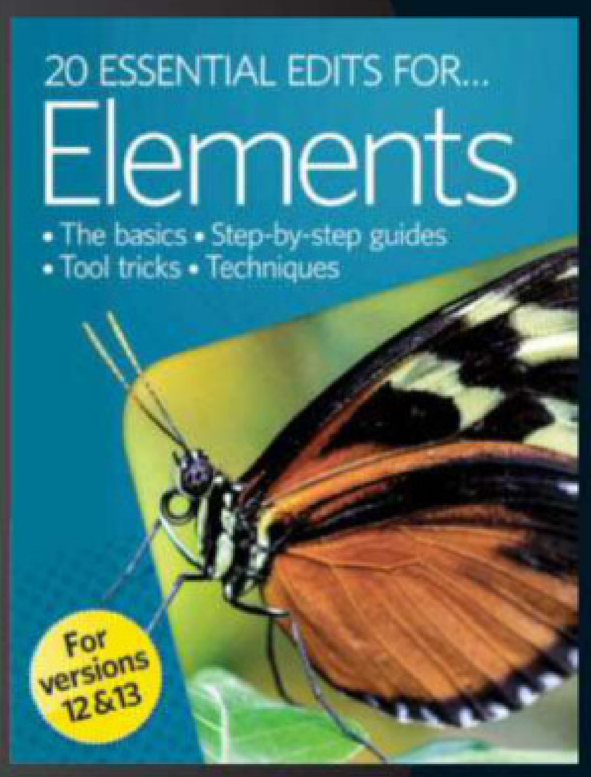
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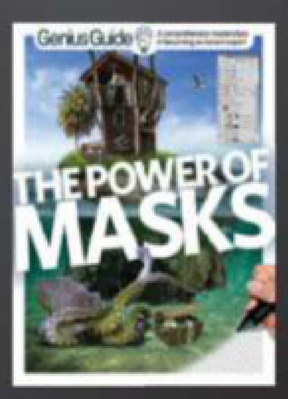
















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Essentials

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What you'll learn

The Pen tool, Gradient Overlays, custom shapes, shape layers and masks

Time taken

2 hours

Expert



Moe Hezwani

"When I discovered the Pen tool in Photoshop it revealed to me another form of illustration; I was able to bring my hand-drawn sketches to life by giving them a digital feel. I'm a professional graphic designer and illustrator, and Photoshop is my go-to platform for my designs."

Use the Pen tool for gradient art

Become the master of the Pen tool and create a vibrant illustration

Have you ever sketched a drawing by hand and wondered what it would look like digitally? The best way to achieve this in Photoshop is to trace it using the Pen tool.

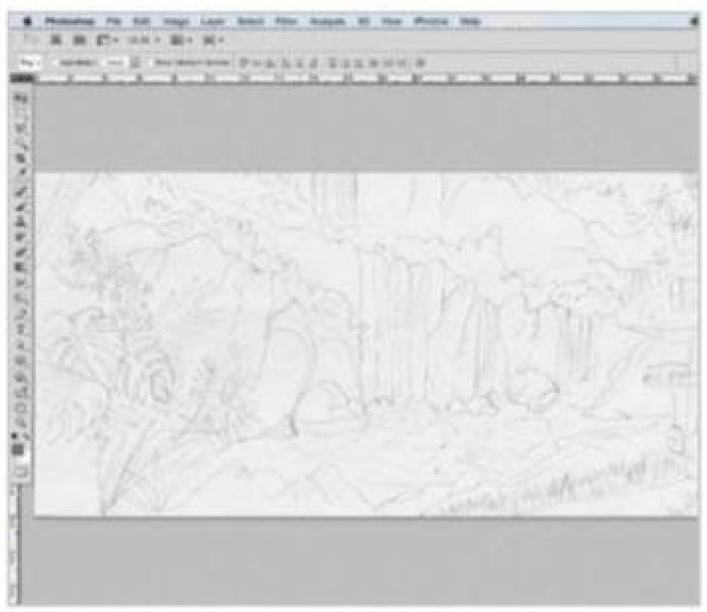
There are three options to choose from when using the Pen tool: Vector, Path or Pixel. Using the Options bar, there is a set of three icons on the left. The first icon is the Shape Layer option and this is for drawing vector shapes.

A vector is made up of mathematical points connected by either a straight line or a curve. Don't worry too much about the mathematical aspect of a vector though; just focus on drawing the shape. Another great thing about vectors is that each time you make a change to the shape, either by resizing or reshaping it, you won't lose the image quality or resolution. Follow this guide and see for yourself. The sketch is provided on the FileSilo.

Share your Pen tool gradient artwork! Tweet us @pshopcreative

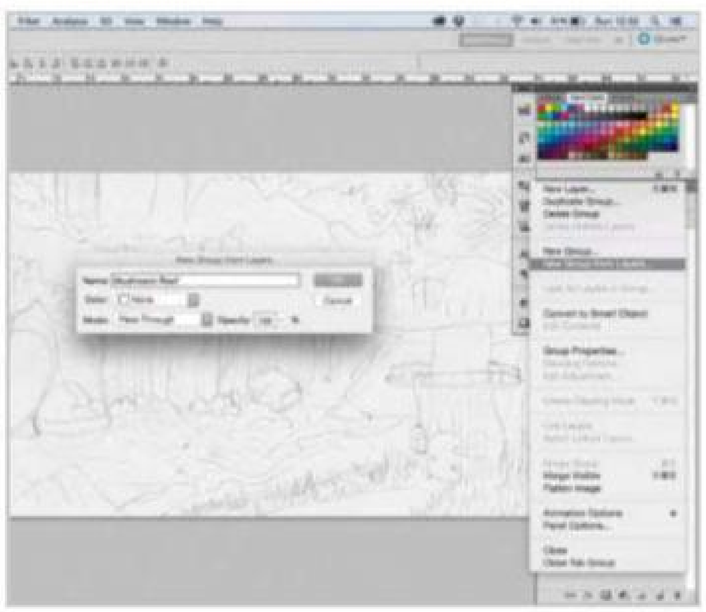
On the FileSilo

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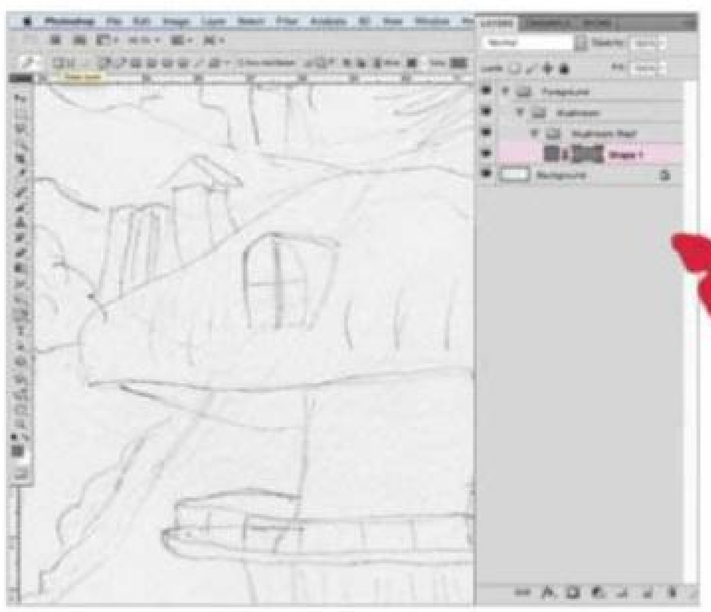
Begin the process

01 Start by drawing out your illustration or open up 'Gradient_StartImage.jpg' from the FileSilo. We will be using the illustration as a guide. As you begin to draw all of the elements into Photoshop, you may want to free-hand new additional aspects of the illustration.



Select New Group

02 Keeping your Layers palettes organised will become useful as you progress. Within your Layers palette, you will have an option called New Group; select it and call your folder Foreground. Within that folder make a new one called Mushroom and then another called Mushroom roof.



Choose Shape layers

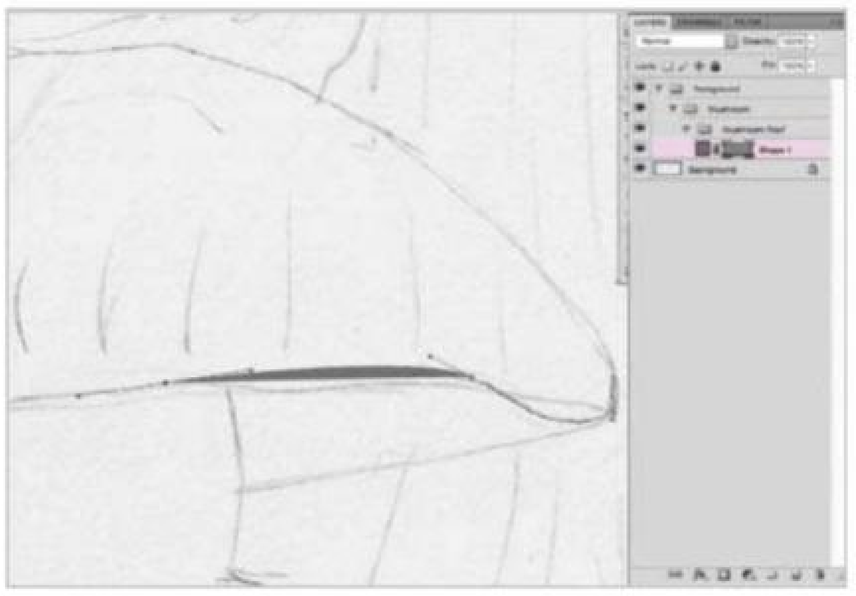
03 Select the Pen tool (P). Use this tool to trace over your original drawing. Make sure you select the Shape layer on the top-left of the Pen tool toolbar. This will allow you to create vector shapes. Plus, every time you close a path, a new layer will automatically be added to your Layers palette.

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Expert tip

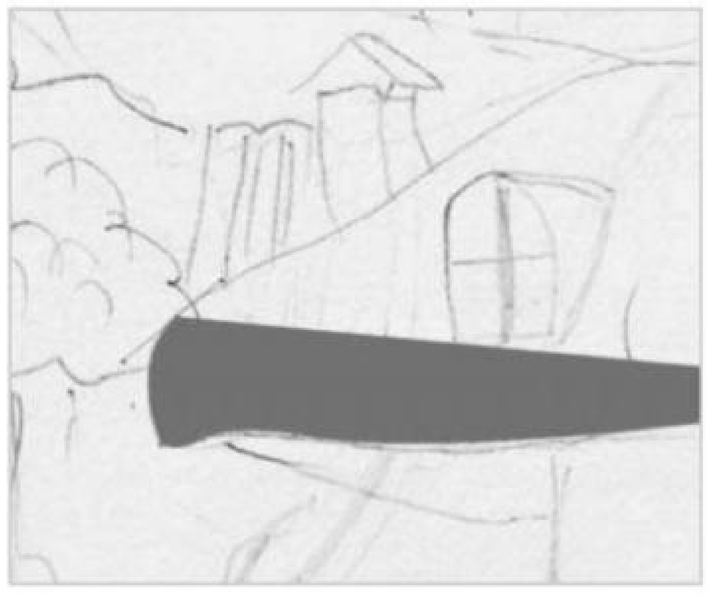
Swatches palette

With this type of illustration you will be using a lot of different colours. For easy and accurate colour selection, the Swatches palette provides hundreds of the most used colours. However, if you want to use your own specific colour scheme you can customise the swatch palette to display your choice of colour. To do this set the foreground colour to the colour you wish to save as a swatch. Then, from the swatch palette drop down menu click New Swatch.



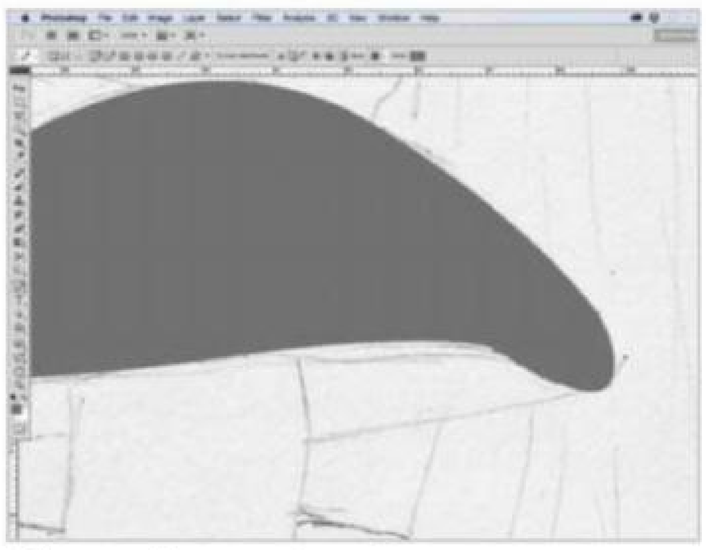
Create anchor points

04 To create your first anchor point, click on the canvas at the point you want to start. Create a second anchor by clicking a few millimetres away from the first. To create a curve, position the Pen tool where you want the curve to begin, hold down the mouse button and then drag.



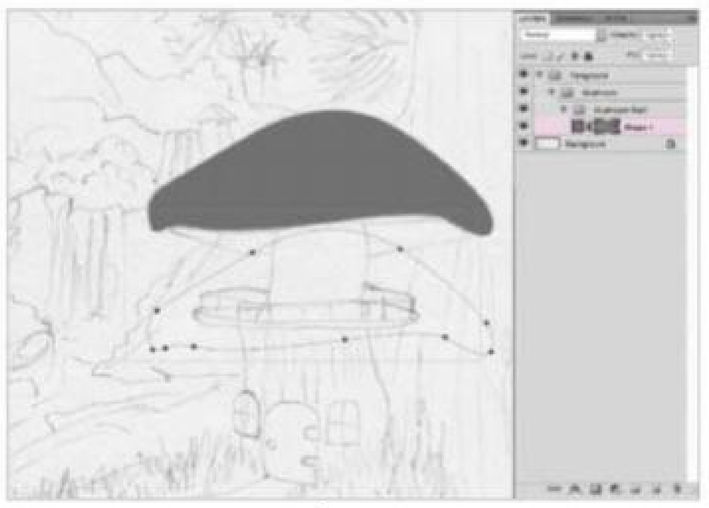
Change direction

05 You will get to a point where you will want to alter the direction of your curve. After you have clicked and dragged to create the curve, you can directly press Option/Alt+click and move the tangent point into the correct position; then continue.



Close the path

06 When you begin to finish your first shape, you will need to close the path. In order to close your shape you have to click with the Pen on the first anchor point. You will notice a little circle near the Pen; once you click that your path will close.



Move vector shapes

07 Once you have closed the path to your first shape you will notice that the tangents have disappeared. Select the Path Selection tool (A) and click on your shape to select and/or move the existing vector shape and to visualise where your tangents are for editing them if necessary.



Select Gradient Overlay

08 To add a gradient to your shape, click the layer's shape to bring the Layer Style. Select the Gradient Overlay, click on the Gradient bar to bring up the Gradient editor. Make the first colour stop a light red and the second a darker red, then hit OK.



Continue drawing

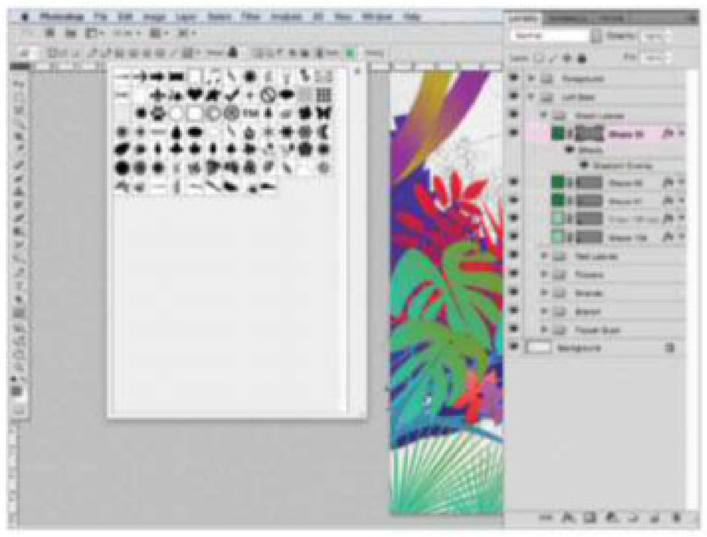
09 Finish drawing the rest of the mushroom using the techniques from steps 2 to 8. Now, draw the base of the grass and the pathway (make sure the layers are below the rest of the mushroom). Give the grass a green gradient and make the path a sold light brown.



Duplicate shapes

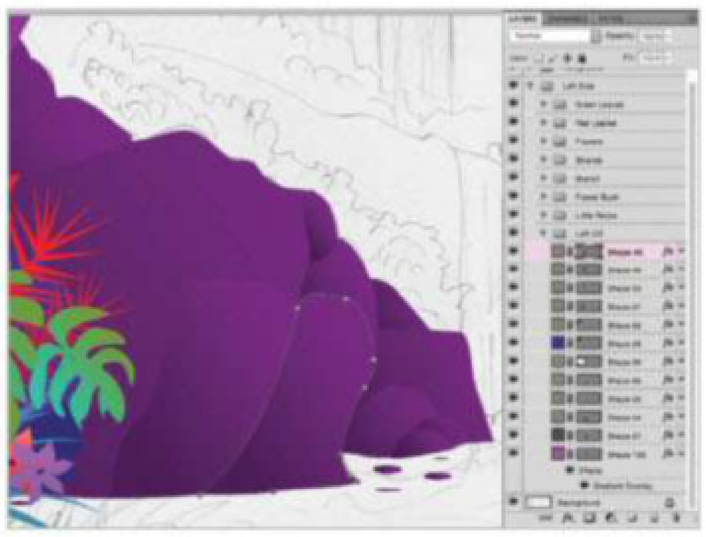
10 To create grass strands head to the Custom Shape tool and select the 'Grass 2' shape. Click, drag and release to create the shape and give it the same green gradient as the grass base. To duplicate, click Cmd/Ctrl+J on the layer's shape and use Path Selection tool to move to place. Repeat to create all the strands.

stormdags



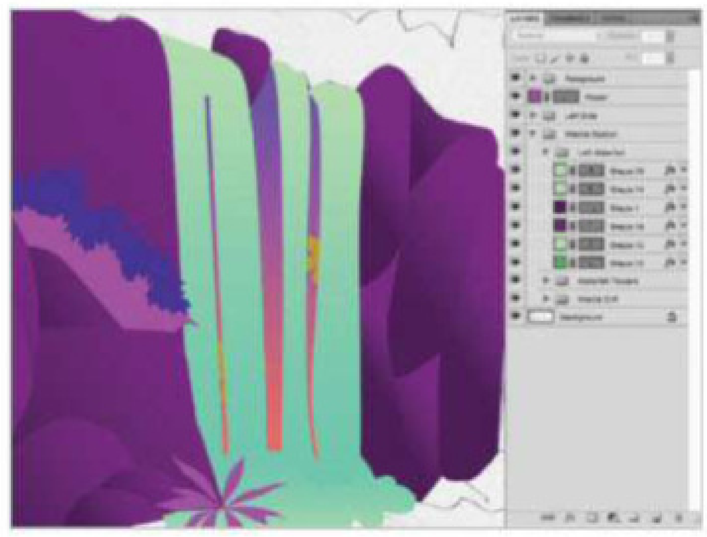
Add landscape shapes

11 Open 'Landscape Shapes', from your source, by double-clicking the file to open the shapes into your Custom Shapes. Select the Custom Shapes tool and notice the new shapes. Create the bush using the shapes and give them vibrant gradients using the same technique as step 8.



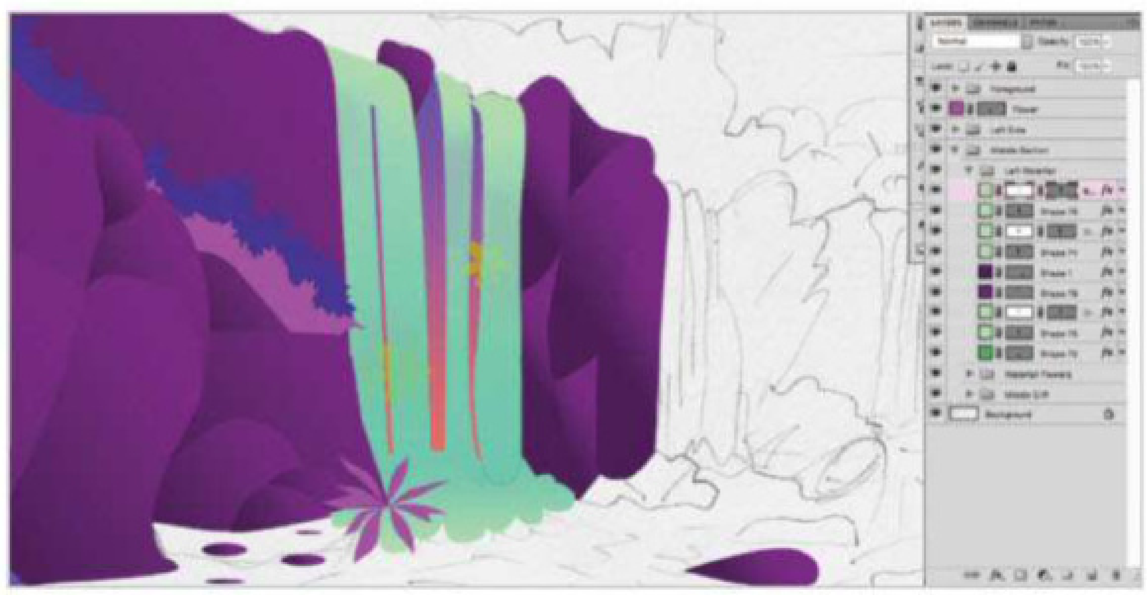
Add gradient rocks

12 When drawing the rocks to produce the cliff shape, draw each rock into a separate shape layer; give them the same purple gradient. Even though each rock has the same gradient, they haven't blended in together; instead the gradient has helped you make a more realistic cliff.



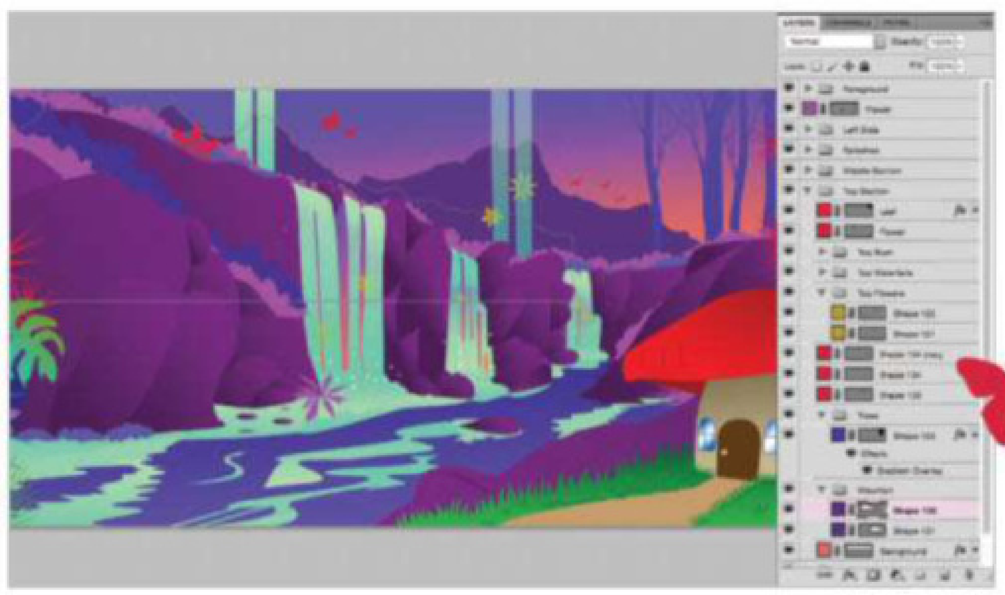
Insert the waterfall

13 Start by drawing the cliff around the waterfall and add a purple and pink gradient as the water behind the waterfall, then add two yellow flowers. Next, draw the waterfall giving it an aqua gradient. Make sure the waterfall folder with its shape layers is above all the other layer folders.



Adjust water transparency

14 Notice after you drew the waterfall you lost the visibility of the flowers. To bring them back, duplicate the waterfall layers. Give the original layers a 60% Opacity and add a mask to the duplicated layers. Grab the Brush tool, with a soft 40% Opacity brush and simply brush away the areas over the flowers.



Finish off

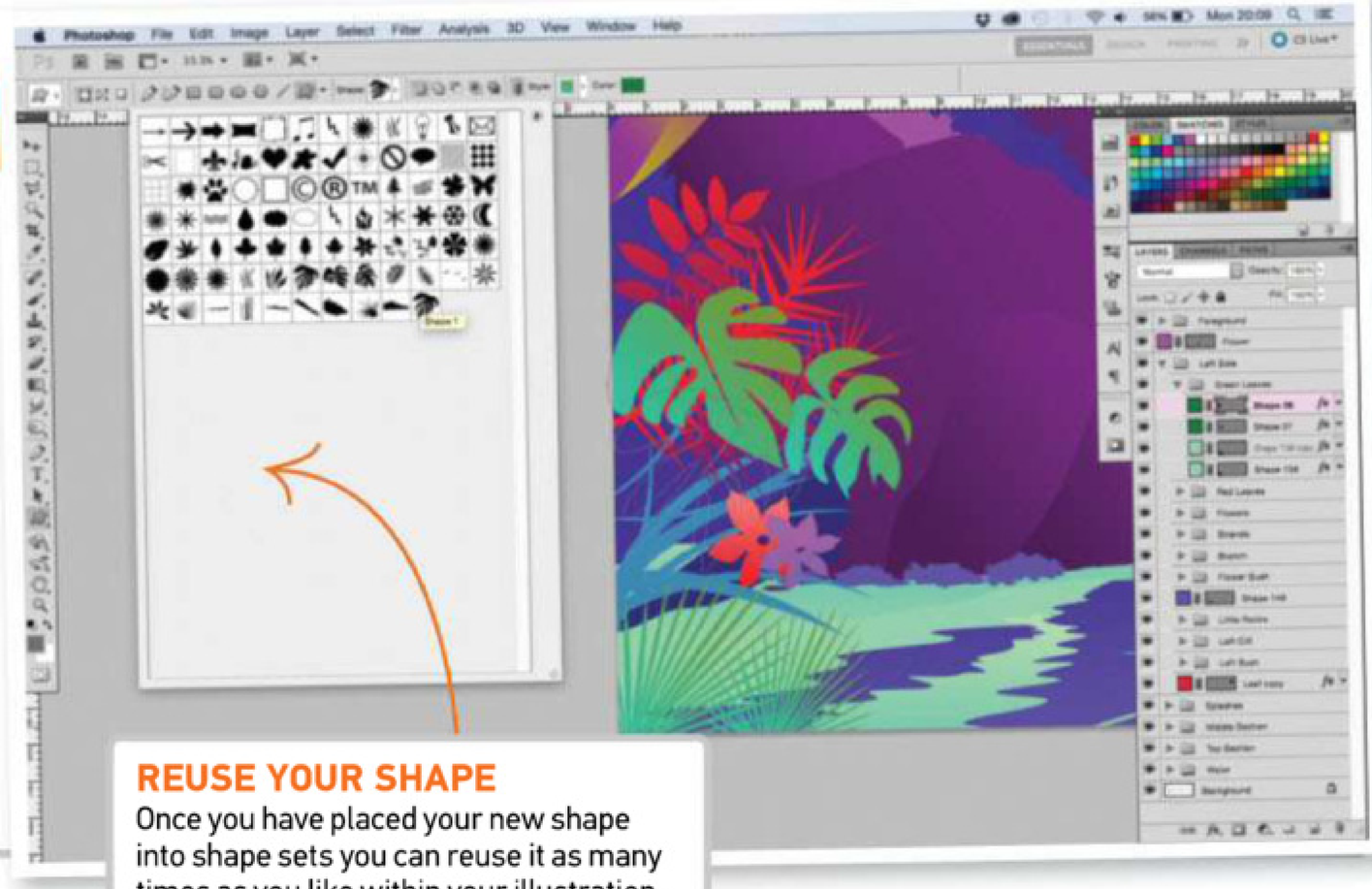
15 Carry on drawing the rest of your illustration, using as many as the custom shapes to build up the illustration and using lots of vibrant gradients. Using all the same techniques from the previous steps. You don't have to stick to the sketch, try to be as creative as possible.

Expert tip

Create your own shapes

Within this tutorial the landscape greenery was provided for you, however, why don't you take a crack at making your own shapes that you can reuse as many times as you like.

To create your own custom shapes, draw your object (a leaf, for example) as usual, using the Pen tool; making sure Shape Layers is selected. Once you have drawn your shape, select it using the Path Selection tool and then go to Edit>Define Custom Shape... Then name your new shape and hit OK. Next, head over to the Custom Shape tool and your new shape will be ready and waiting for you there.



REUSE YOUR SHAPE

Once you have placed your new shape into shape sets you can reuse it as many times as you like within your illustration. Don't forget to give it a vibrant gradient to match the rest!



On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

- How to create an out-of-bounds effect using masks and layer styles

Time taken
2 hours

Expert



Daniel Sinoca

"Creating an out-of-bounds effect is always great fun. With a few tweaks and the right technique, it's possible to make any image jump right out of a frame to mimic a 3D effect.

"I started to get involved in the digital world more than 10 years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides."



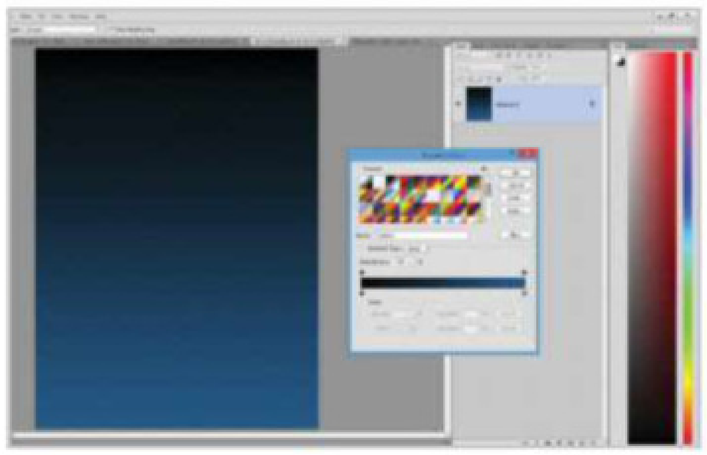
Apply masks and layer styles

Use masks, layer styles, custom brushes and blend modes to make an image jump out of the frame

Creating an out of bounds effect is a great way to learn new Photoshop skills. To make this popular effect you have to use several techniques and tools such as masks, selection tools, brushes, layer styles and filters. Despite this, the effect is quite easy to achieve, we're going to show you how to add a bit of creativity and transform this simple effect in a stunning out-of-bounds photo composition.

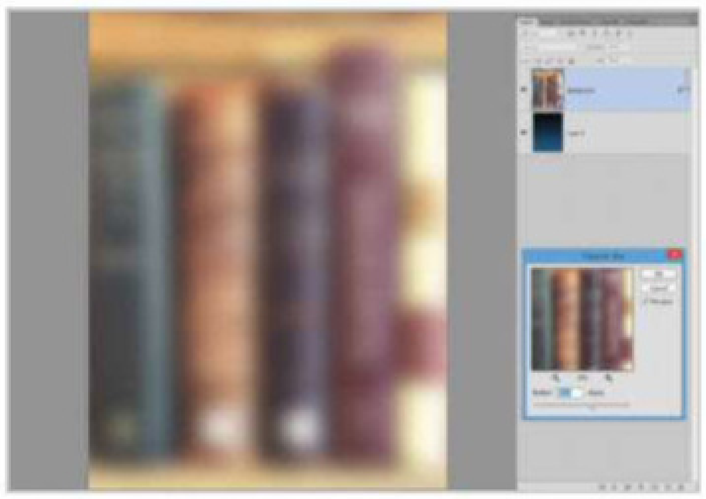
First you'll learn how to create a nice background using the Gaussian blur filter and a few tweaks, then you'll work with layer styles to create a frame and shadows, and use layer masks for creative effects. We'll also cover different selection tools and use the Warp command to modify the image. Last but not least you'll use custom brushes and several filters to simulate a snowfall effect.

This easy step-by-step tutorial will guide you through the entire process. At the end you will be able to use these techniques in your own projects, as you can use any photos to achieve marvellous results. Check the Expert tip for extra advice and don't forget to download the start images and brushes from the FileSilo.



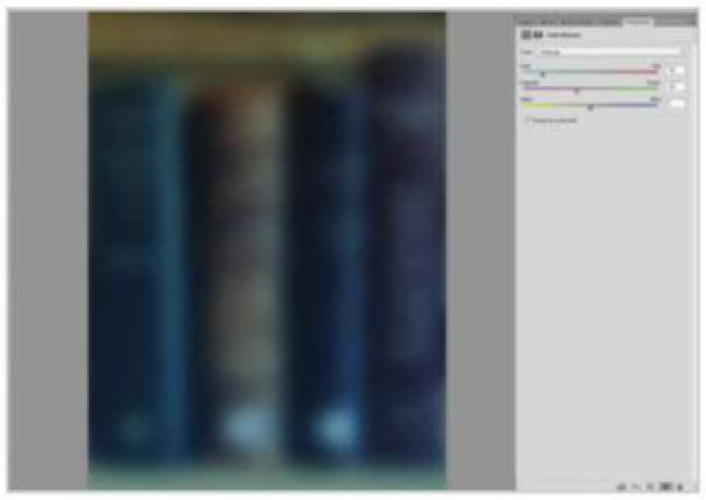
Open a new document

01 Go to File>New. Name it Out of Bounds. Set Width: 230, Height: 310, Resolution: 300ppi and hit Return/Enter. Grab the Gradient tool (G). Open the Gradient Editor. Set the first stop to black, the second stop to colour #0f5988 and click OK. Hold Shift and drag from the top to the bottom.



Create the background

02 Now go to File>Place Embedded 'Background.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. To make a blurry background simply go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set the Radius to 80 pixels and hit OK. Set the layer's Fill to 70%.



Correct the tone

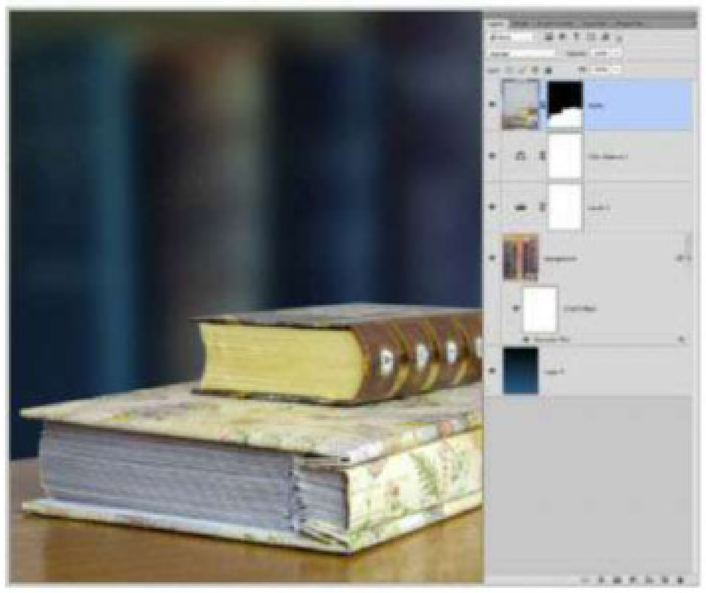
03 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Set the Input levels to 25, 0.70 and 255. Add a Color Balance adjustment layer. Set Tone: Midtones, Cyan/Red: -70, Magenta/Green: -20, Yellow/Blue: 0 and Preserve Luminosity.

Expert tip

Brush tip shape

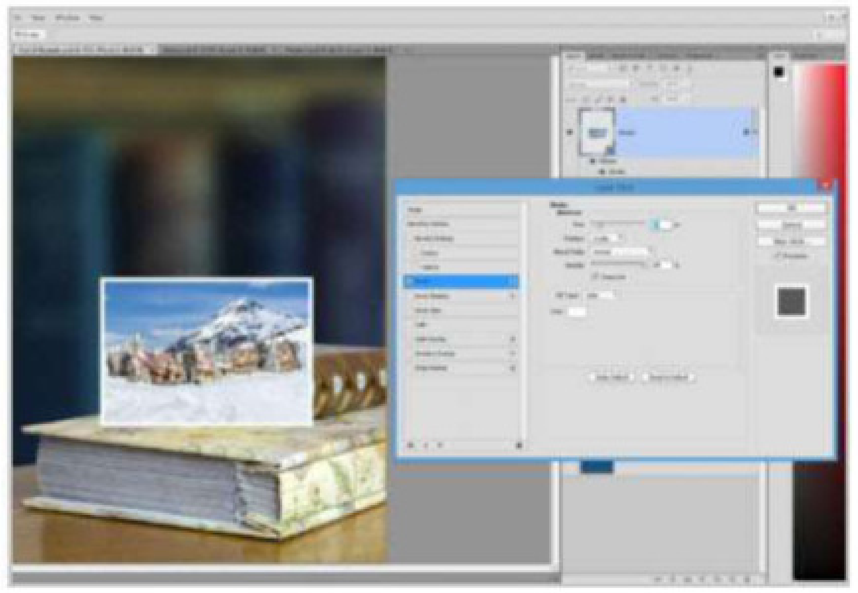
You can change the default brush setting easily to create a realistic blowing-snow effect over the image.

Select the Brush tool and hit F5. Then choose a small soft tip brush. Next you need to check Shape Dynamics and adjust the Size Jitter to 100%, Minimum Diameter to 1%, and Roundness Jitter to 40%. Check Scattering and adjust Scatter to 1000%, then you need to check Both Axes and Count 1. Set the Spacing to 65% and start painting the snow paths.



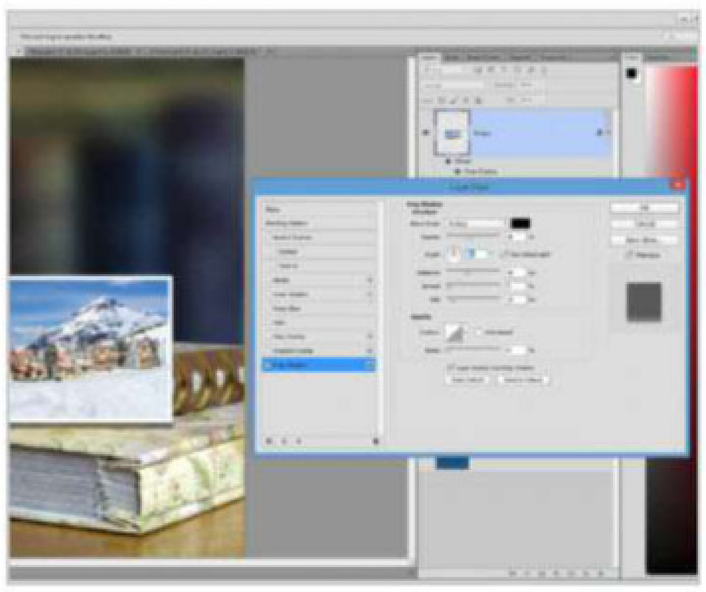
Place the books

04 Go to File>Place Embedded 'Books.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Grab the Polygonal Lasso tool, set Feather to 3 pixels and make a selection around the books and table. Create a layer mask. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal Selection.



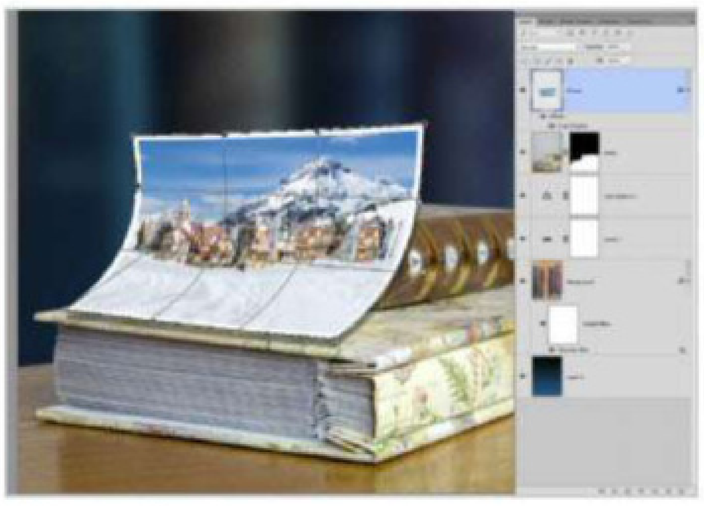
Set layer style

05 Go to File>Place Embedded 'Photo1.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Now create a border. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Stroke. Set Size to 30 pixels, Position: Inside, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, check Overprint, choose Fill Type: Colour and set it to white. Now go to Layer>Rasterize>Layer Style.



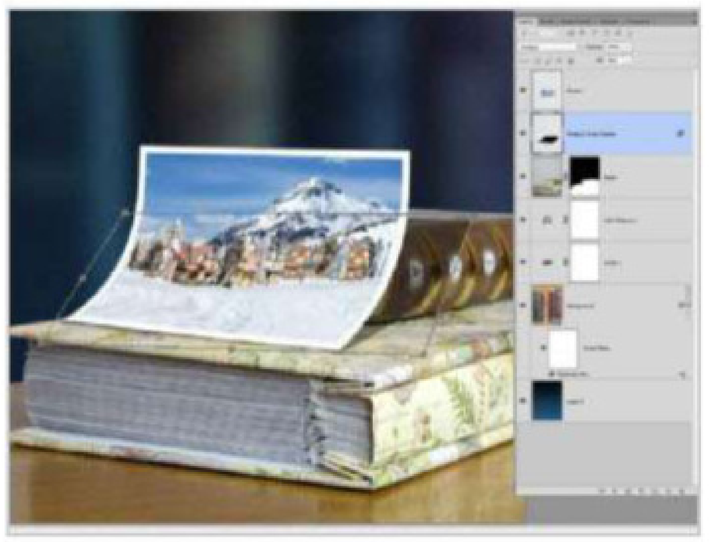
Add a Drop Shadow

06 Now you need to add a shadow. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow. Then set the blend mode to Multiply, Opacity: 45%, Angle: 90°, Distance: 40 pixels, Spread: 5% and Size: 15 pixels, then hit OK.



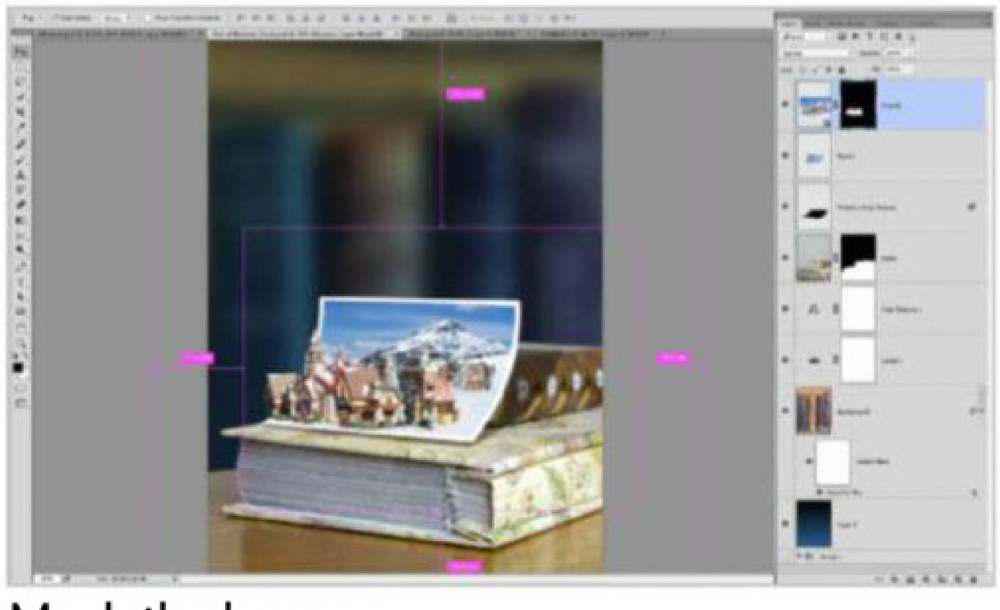
Warp the image

07 Let's adjust the perspective and warp the photo. Go to Edit>Transform>Perspective. Drag the corners to adjust the angles (use the book cover angle as a guide). Now go to Edit>Transform>Warp. Carefully start dragging to create a curved shape. Hit Return/Enter to commit.



Fix the shadow

08 Let's add the shadow to the layer. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Create Layer. In the Layers palette click the new Photo1's Drop Shadow layer. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform tool. Drag the handlers to adjust the perspective, then hit Return/Enter.



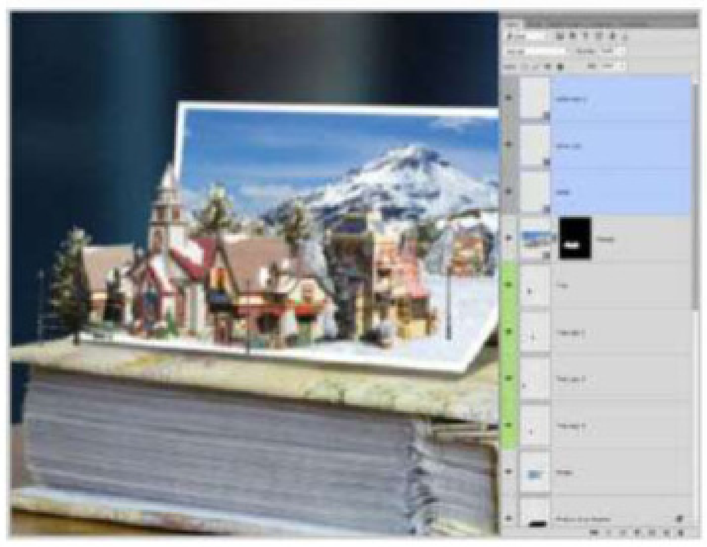
Mask the houses

09 Now we need to mask a few houses. Go to File>Place 'Photo1.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Name the new layer Houses. Grab the Pen tool (P) and create a path around the houses. In the Option bar click Selection then OK. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal Selection.



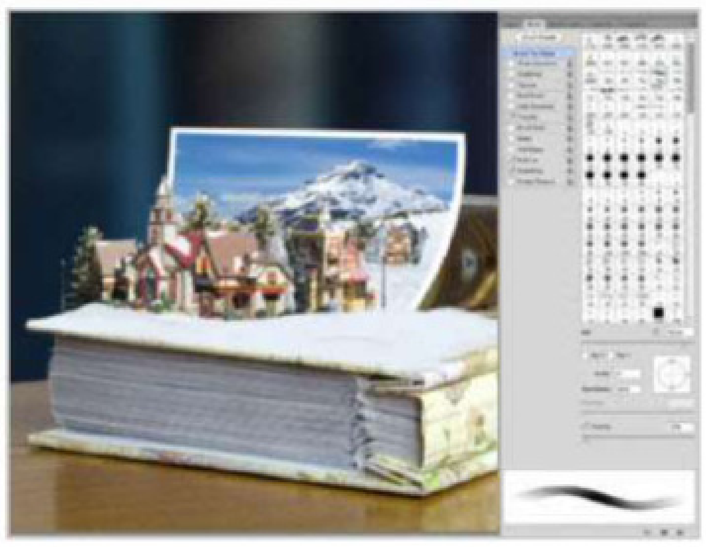
Add trees

10 Create a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N). Name it Tree and click OK. Go to Filter>Render>Tree. Choose Base Tree Type: Pine Tree1, adjust the settings and click OK. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+L and set the Input levels to 15, 0.60, 200 then click OK. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+U. Set the Saturation to -50 and click OK.



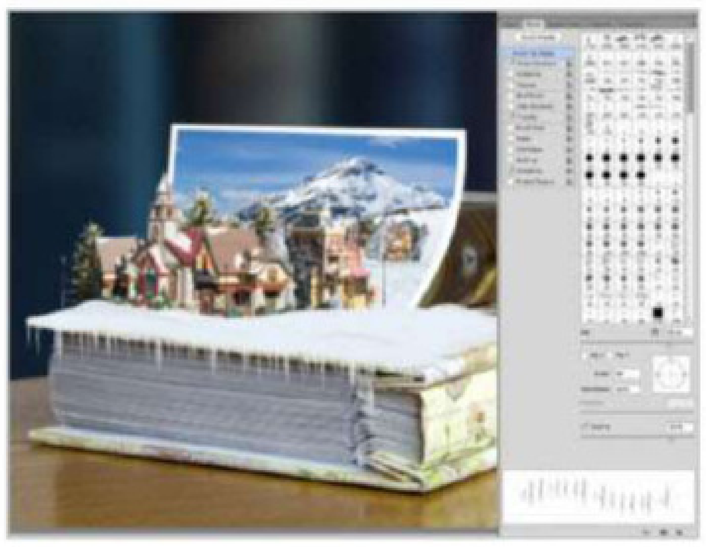
Enhance the tree

11 Grab the Dodge tool (O). Choose a small soft brush, set Range to Highlights, Exposure: 100% and with repetitive strokes start painting the leaves to simulate snow. Resize and duplicate the tree layer, placing behind the houses. Go to File>Place 'Lamp.png', resize it and place in front of the houses.



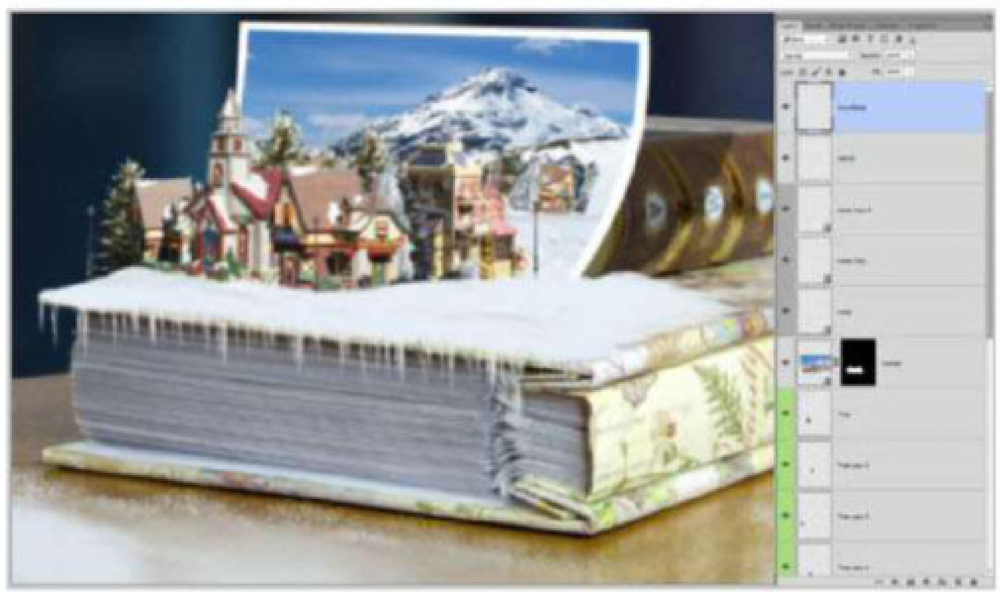
Load custom brushes

12 Go to Edit>Preset>Preset Manager and click Load. Locate the 'Snow_brushes.abr', click Load and then Done. Create a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N). Name it Snow. Grab the Brush tool and hit F5. Find the 'Snow1' brush, set the Foreground colour to #e8eff7, paint the book with snow.



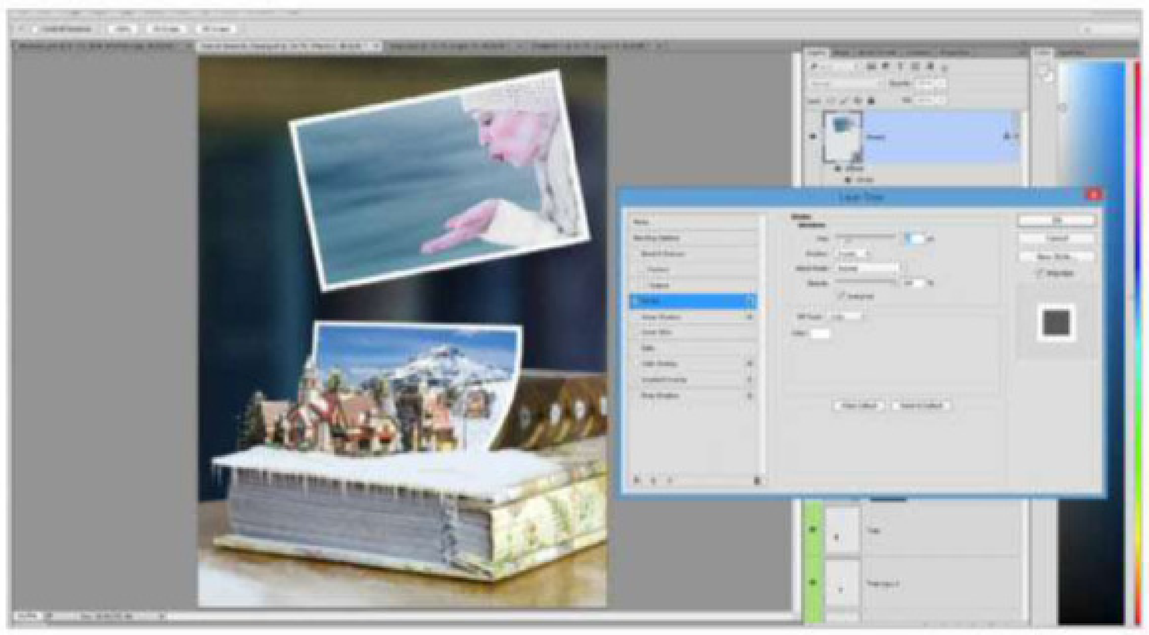
Add ice spikes

13 On the Brush panel select the 'ice spike1' brush. In the Option bar disable the Airbrush style effect. Set the Brush angle to 90° and size to 250. Increase the Spacing to 300% and change the Shape Dynamics Size Jitter to 90%. Paint the ice spikes over the book-cover edges.



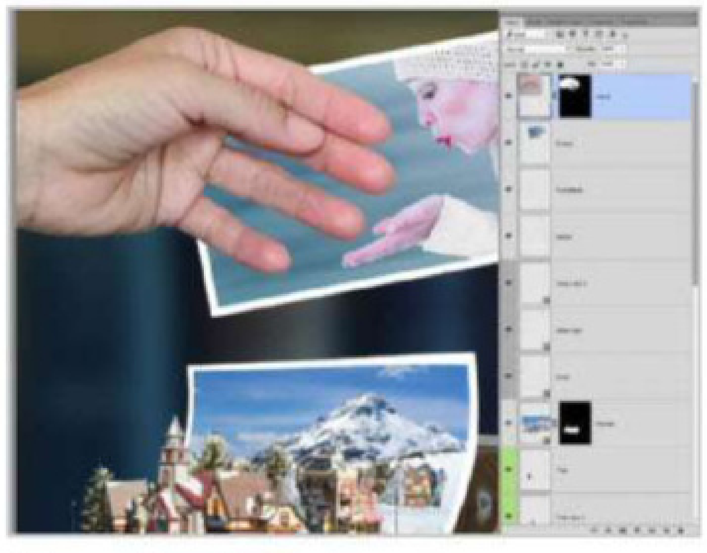
Apply more brushes

14 Now let's create a powder of snow over the table. Create a new layer and name it Powder snow. On the Brush panel select the 'Powder_snow1' brush. Use a very large brush (around 1800 pixels). Set the Angle to -8, Roundness to 45%. Click a couple times to create the effect.



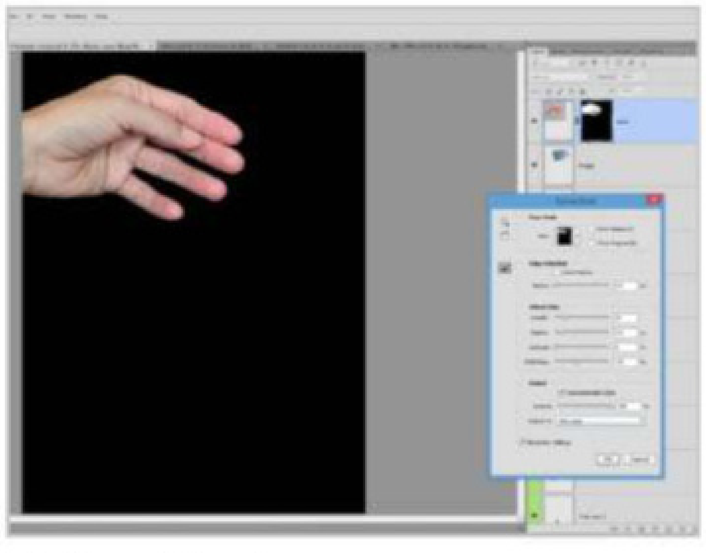
Place another photo

15 Go to File>Place Embedded 'Photo2.jpg.' Resize and rotate the image and hit Return/Enter. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Stroke. Set Size to 40 pixels, Position: Inside, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, check Overprint, choose Fill Type: Colour and set it to white. Click OK.



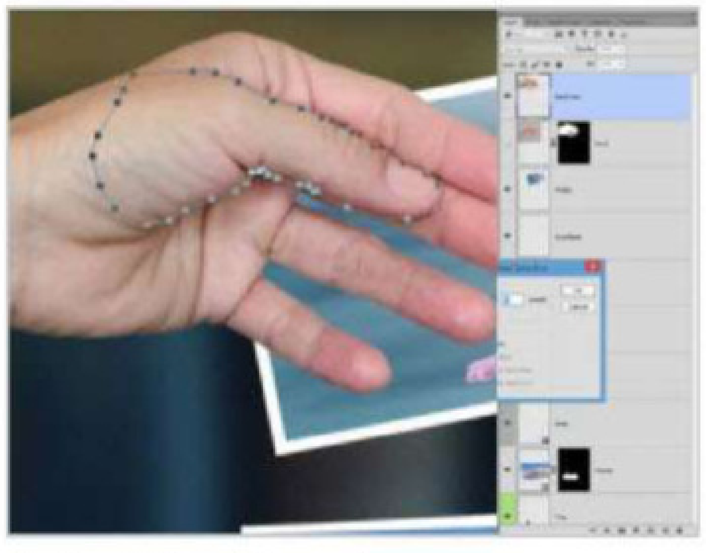
Place the hand

16 Go to File>Place Embedded 'Hand.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Now Rasterize the layer. Go to Layer>Rasterize>Smart Object. Grab the Quick Selection tool (W) and select the Hand. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal Selection.



Refine Mask

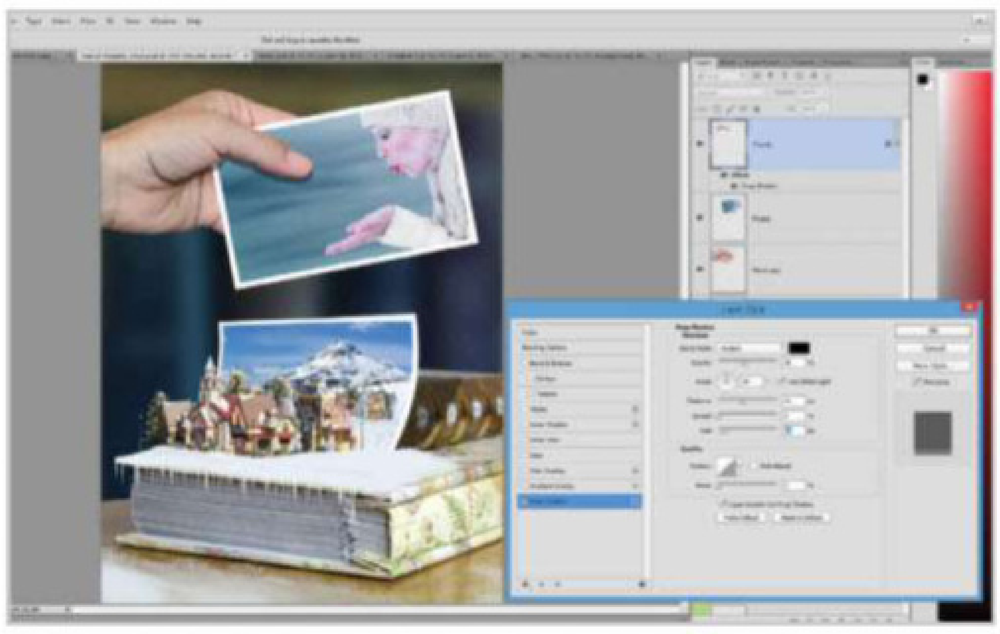
17 Go to Select>Refine Mask. Set the Smooth slider to 20, Feather: 2 pixels, Contrast: 0, Shift Edges: -20, check Decontaminate Colours Amount 100%, now choose the Output to New Layer and then click OK.



Select the thumb

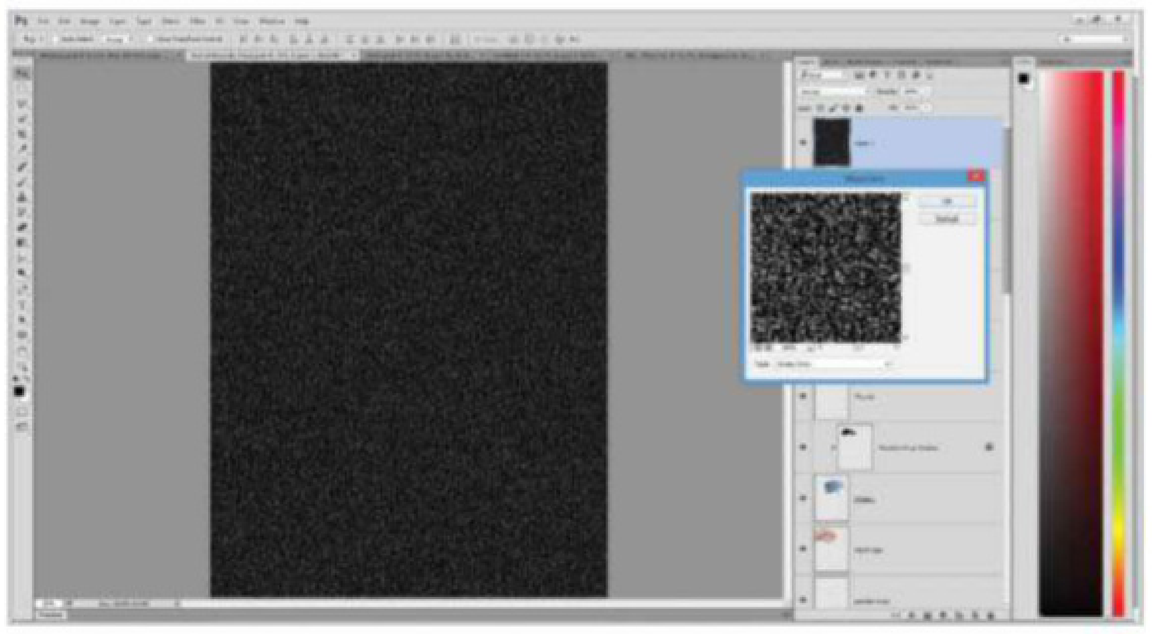
18 Grab the Pen tool (P) and draw a path around the thumb. In the Option bar click Selection. Set the Feather Radius to 1 pixel. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy the thumb in its own layer. Name it Thumb. Now drag the Hand_copy layer under the Photo2 layer.

Tutorial Apply masks and layer styles



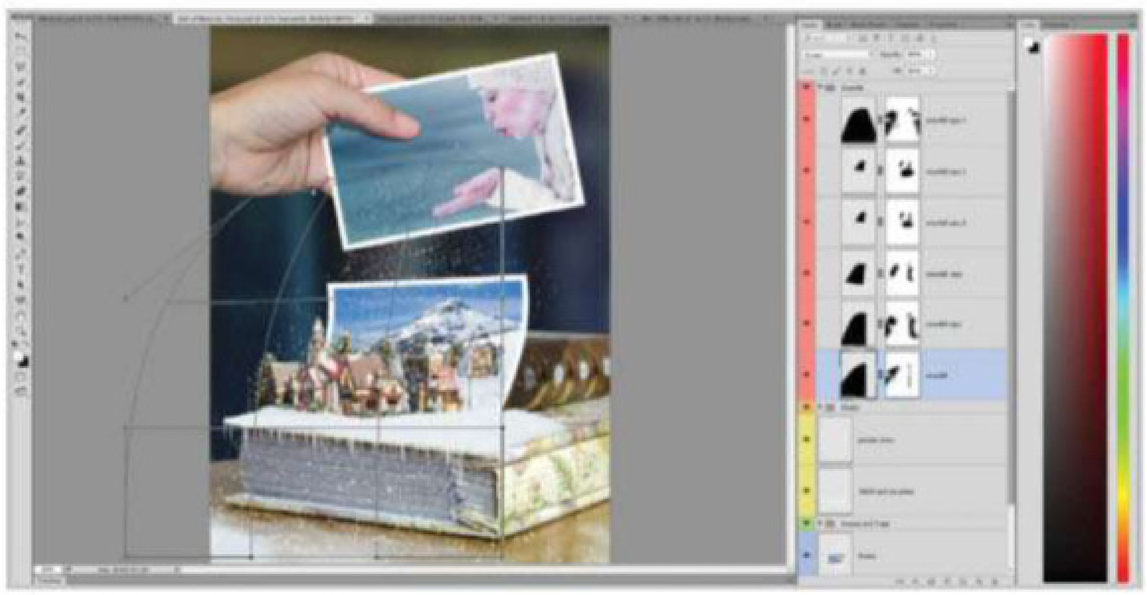
Add Drop Shadow

19 Click on the Thumb layer and go to Layer>Layer Style> Drop Shadow. Set the Opacity to 45%, Distance: 40 pixels, Spread: 0, Size: 10 pixels and click OK. Now go to Layer>Layer Style>Create Layer. Click on the Thumb's Drop Shadow layer and hit Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip the layer.



Create a snowfall effect

20 Create a new layer and name it Snowfall. Hit D on your keyboard to set the default Foreground/Background colour and then hit Option/Alt+D to fill it with black. Go to Filter>Pixelate>Mezzotint. Choose Type: Grainy Dots and click OK. Now go To Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 5 pixels and hit OK.



Use blend modes

21 Hit Cmd/Ctrl+L to open the Levels. Adjust the Inputs to 45, 1.00 and 60 and click OK. Change the blending mode for the layer to Screen. Open the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T) and adjust the size and angle. Use the Warp command to make the snowflakes look like they are coming from the hands.



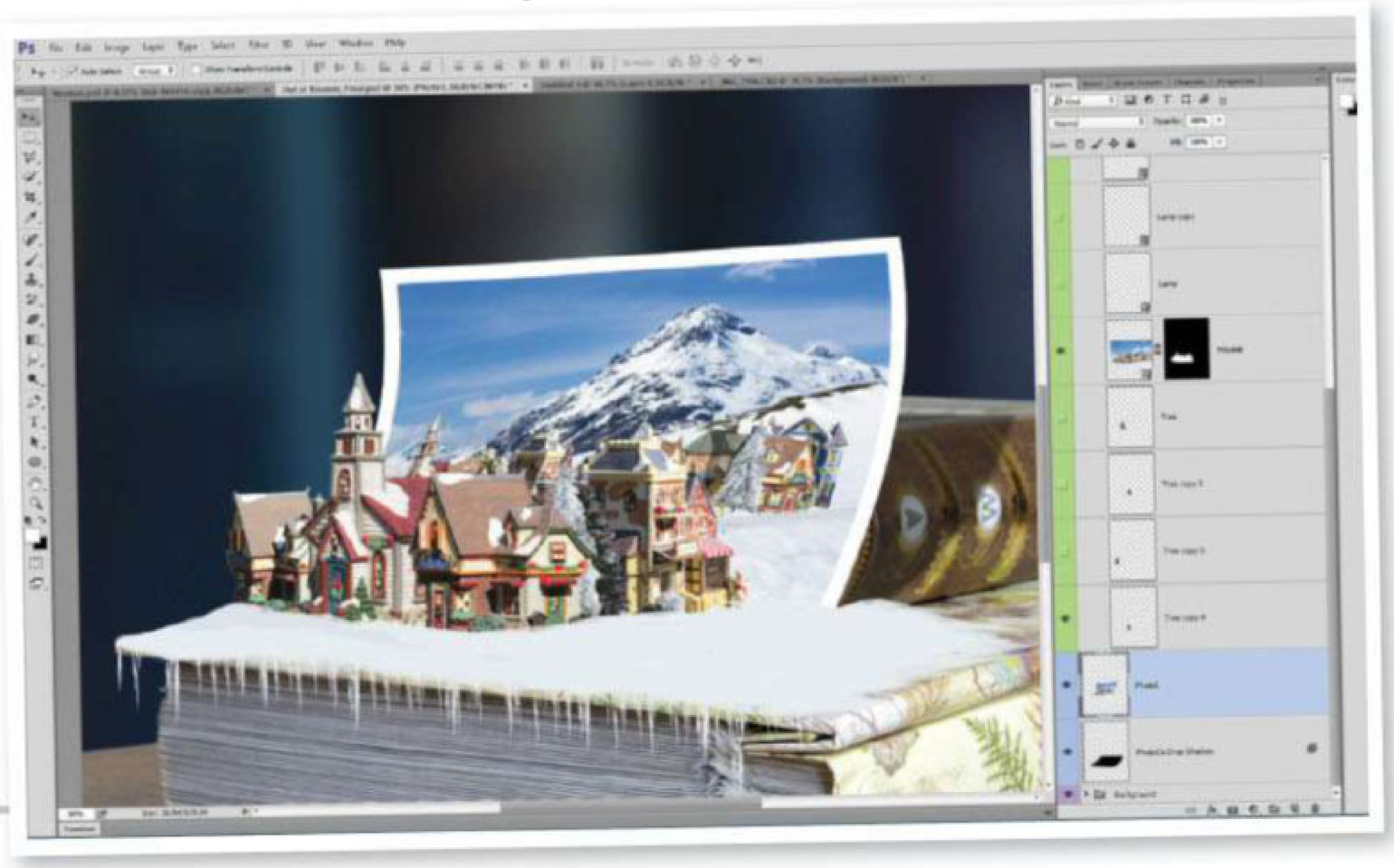
Duplicate the layer

22 To intensify the snowfall effect, duplicate the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and use the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to resize and place on top of each other. Duplicate the layer as many times as you want. Then use a layer mask to get rid of the hard edges.

What can go wrong

Forgetting the background

Despite the out-of-bounds effect being straightforward, there is one thing you have to avoid: when you cut or mask the subject and bring it forward, be sure to hide or remove it from its background to avoid the same subject appearing behind. Depending on the image you use, you may need to retouch the background. The best way to do that is by selecting the subject using any of the selection tools and then use the Content-Aware fill. Select the subject. Go to Edit>Fill, choose Content-Aware and hit OK. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+D to deselect and grab the Clone Stamp tool to fix irregularities.



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SMOOTH SIDES
Use actual wood grain textures to create the long, smooth sides of a wooden block.

THE ENDS
The ends of wooden blocks have different textures as the grain is usually cut through and leaves marks from the saw.

Craft your own 3D textures

Discover how to capture and process your own wood textures to use in 3D applications, including how to apply them to 3D text and enhance the light with HDR images

Crafting textures for use in 3D applications requires a different approach than creating textures for overlays in 2D digital art. Whether you are using the 3D tools in Photoshop or a different application, the basic concepts tend to be the same. Texture maps are applied to the surface of a 3D object in much the same way a sticker or wall placard would be applied to a real-world object.

The main difference is the fact that 3D texture maps can be used to define a variety of different visual properties.

When used in general terms, 'texture map' usually refers to the visible colours and patterns of the object. This is actually known as the Diffuse map. But several other visible properties can also be defined by a texture map. It's not uncommon to use a grayscale file to define the opacity of a surface, similar to the way that Photoshop uses layer masks. But that's just the beginning! Texture maps can be used to control the bump, shininess, reflectivity and specular too.

In this resource project you will learn how to create your own wood grain texture maps and use them in Photoshop's 3D tools, including customising your textures, applying them to 3D text for added depth and realism, as well as rendering the finished piece.

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Capture the texture Turn a simple block of wood into a 3D resource



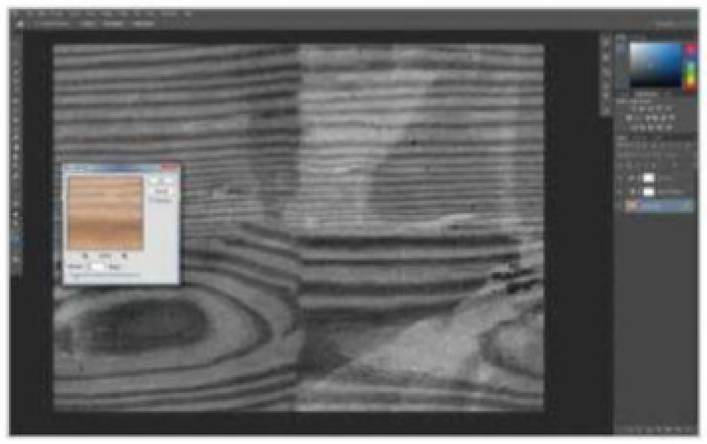
Apply an Offset filter

01 Scan or photograph the wooden block. Make colour adjustments. Crop the image so the grain fills the entire frame. 3D textures must often repeat across a surface seamlessly. Go Filter>Other>Offset to wrap the image round the sides to show the seams.



Remove the seams

02 Create a loose and ragged selection around the seams. Go to Edit>Fill and set the Contents to Content Aware to let Photoshop remove the seams. Save this file to be used as the Color or Diffuse map.



Create a Bump map

03 Add a Black & White adjustment layer. Use the sliders to increase contrast. The Bump map shouldn't be as sharp as the Diffuse map. Use a Gaussian blur of 2 pixels to remove the finer details. Then save separately.

Apply the texture to 3D text Use the textures with the 3D features



Create 3D text

01 Begin with 3D text blocks created by extruding text layers. In the 3D panel, look for the Materials called Extrusion. These are the sides of the extruded letters.



Assign the texture

02 In the Properties panel, look for the Diffuse colour chip and click the folder icon next to it. Click it to load the texture map for the wood grain.

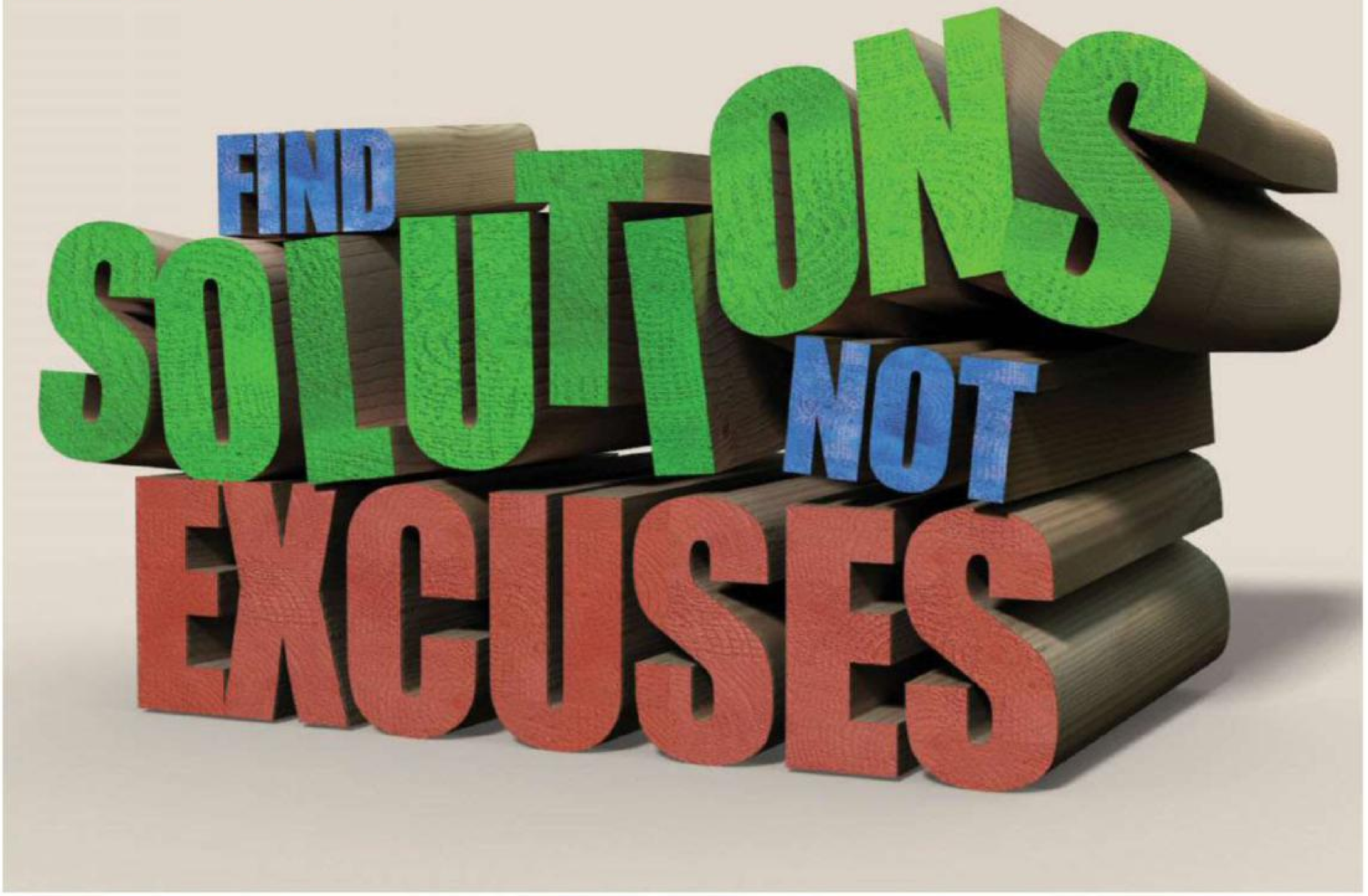


Edit the U/V positions

03 The texture will appear stretched. Go back to the same document icon and choose Edit U/V Properties. Adjust the U setting to repeat until the texture is normal.

High Dynamic Range light sources Create your own HDR images to light the scene





Finish with rendering

Put everything together and create the final rendered effect







Start to render

01 Once all the textures are set, camera angle is locked down and the lighting adjusted, it's time to render! Save time by creating a selection around the 3D elements and shadow area first.

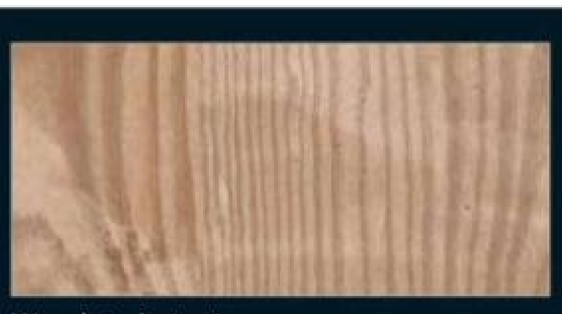
Accentuate the contrast

02 It can be helpful to have several different renders to work with. Remove the texture maps and render out a slate grey version to be used to help accentuate the contrast of the colour render.

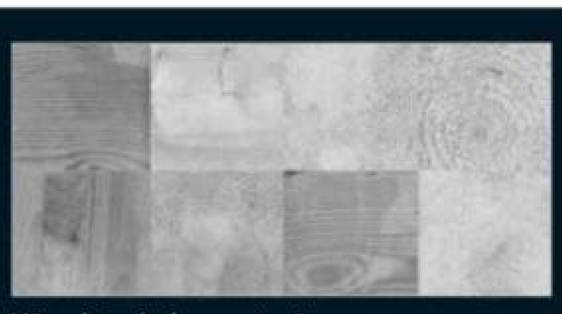
Put it all together

03 Don't forget that Photoshop is the perfect tool for adding additional effects to the final 2D image. Use the multiple renders with blending modes to create a finished composite image.

FileSilo



Wood grain textures
High quality wooden texture maps perfect for crafting your own 3D letter blocks, or any other object that needs to look like it is made out of wood.



Wood grain bump textures
These grayscale textures are the form fitting partners of the wooden diffuse maps. Use them to add roughness and texture to the wooden objects



Custom HDR images
Three custom-made HDR images to use for a variety of outdoor lighting environments. Each unique in its colour palette and overall brightness.

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"The fastest and easiest way to texture"
- Simon Fox, Blizzard

"Holy shit this is bad ass"
- David Lesperance, Valve

"An essential part of my pipeline"
- Josh Marlow, Epic

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Reconquering the world

A personal project that Niklas Axelsson squashed in between an internship and his current job, *Animals Reconquer The World* is doing just that

About the artist



Niklas Axelsson
www.behance.net/niklasaxelsson
@NiklasPhoto

Niklas Axelsson studied 3D animation and visualisation at the University of Trollhättan, near Gothenburg. Then he did a two-year course in photography and moved to Stockholm for an internship. He recently started working at Señor Retouch Studio (**www.senjor.se**), where he describes himself as thriving.

Name of the project
Animals Reconquer The World

The idea for his *Animals Reconquer The World* images came to Niklas Axelsson when he was thinking about the serious topics of animal rights and the threat of extinction. The way to cover it, he decided was to "flip the idea around and turn it into something more surrealistic and ironic by trying to create an amusing image solution while keeping the serious meaning for animal rights and their survival."

He started the project in March 2015 and spent two intensive months on it, using Photoshop and Maya. "My goal," he adds, "was to use my 3D knowledge and combine it with photos to create my montages." So far he's created two rather amusing images, one of a killer whale in a swimming pool and the other of an elephant on timeout – but he's definitely planning to do more.



Elephant on timeout

Stitching together the background

How did you begin to build your fantastic images?

Because my images are 100 per cent montage there is much about composition and the build up to bring it all together as one picture. Trying to connect all the images that consist in the montage and the lighting, shadows, angles and perspective and so on. This is an important base, otherwise the whole picture falls on some of these principles because the eye quickly sees if something is wrong.

There must be a lot of selection involved, so how do you create the masks that you use?

When I make a montage like these pictures, I do a lot of masking. I try to isolate objects that I want to fit into the new image, and create the perfect place or images that those photographers were not able to take. So my use of Color Range is quite common to me when I try to isolate objects quickly and easily.

Often I take a further look at the edges to be more accurate and make some adjustments depending on how good the mask is. Otherwise I mask or isolate objects by hand if there is time, and I often soften up the edges of some pixels to avoid those unrealistic transitions between, for instance, a tree and the sky.

What about 3D – which bits did you build in Maya?

The elephant, killer whale, water and car were all created in 3D software. The elephant, car and killer whale were bought specifically for this project because of the tight schedule. So for these 3D models I reshaped, played with lighting, textured and posed them in the right angle that I wanted so that they would fit into the image.

After that, you just have to make them feel that they really are in the image. Therefore the shadows are really necessary.

How do you blend it all together so seamlessly?

When you create a huge montage like this or even bigger, shadows are something that you can't run away from. Sometimes I create them in the 3D program, but otherwise I do it with Curves and just pull down the white point and

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All images © Niklas Axelsson

Perspective of the pool



Retouching the killer whale



Time to colour correct



use the blending options to let some highlights pass through if I want to.

Blending modes are something that I used a lot in this project. For example, when I applied some water splashes or added some textures to the image. The ones I most often use are Screen, Multiply, Overlay, Lighten, Darken and so on.

What about the final touches?

Once I have put the whole picture together and everything looks cool, we are just halfway there because the picture needs some grading before it's all done.

The picture needs to be more harmonious and adjusted so it's easy to look at. Choose which colours you want to match and which ones you want or don't want to focus on.

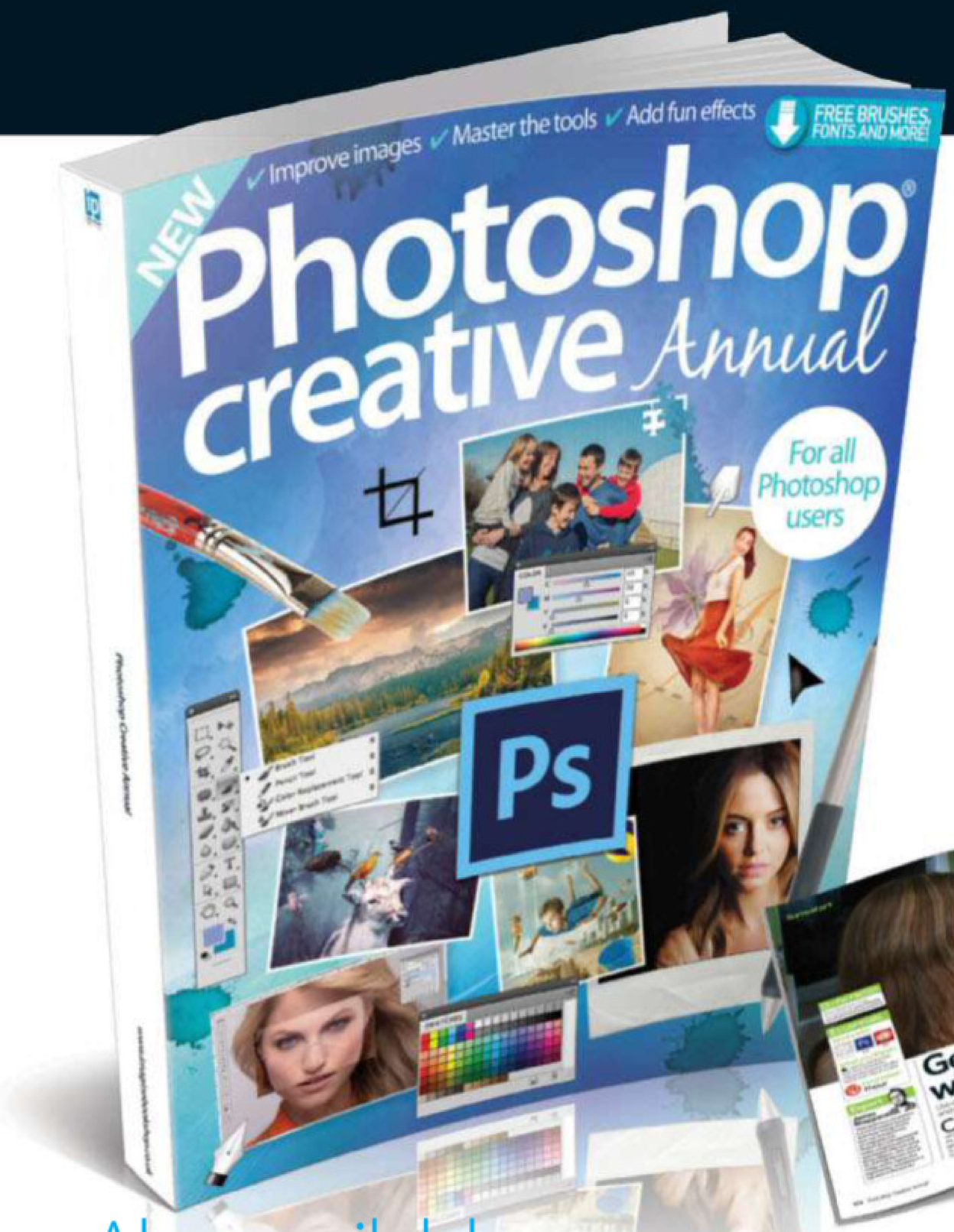
I always use Curves to get the most out of my images. Add three Curves, one with a lot of contrast, one with more highlights and one with darker areas. Then it's really easy to see and mask in or out of those parts that you think need to be lifted up or that need more contrast added for example.

Try to find a nice tone in the picture and thereafter keep on going in the direction you want to finish it off.

What sort of response have you had to the images?

I published them on **www.Behance.net** and have already received a lot of great comments and appreciations on the work, which makes me really happy! We had a vernissage this summer and people really liked them, except one person who thought they weren't art, but rather the worst pictures he had ever seen because they looked cartoonish. I can't blame him for that, because both pictures are surrealistic with a lot of colours, and they're funny. I wanted that kind of feeling from my pictures, so I guess I succeeded.

From the makers of Photoshop creative



Photoshop creative Annual

Put your Photoshop knowledge to the test with this year's Photoshop Creative Annual. Collecting together the best effects from the last year of Photoshop Creative, you'll learn how to make basic edits through to the best creative projects.



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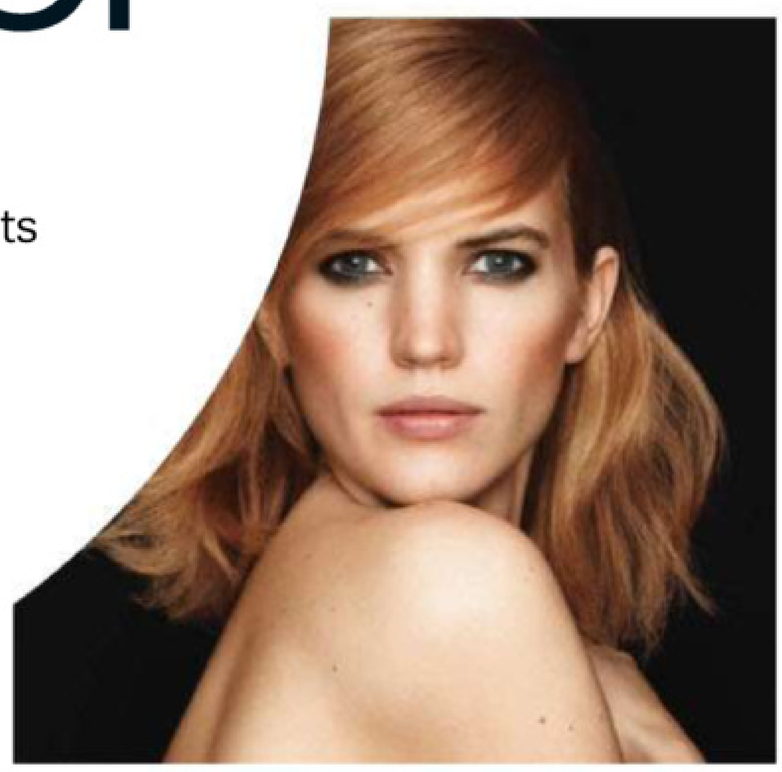
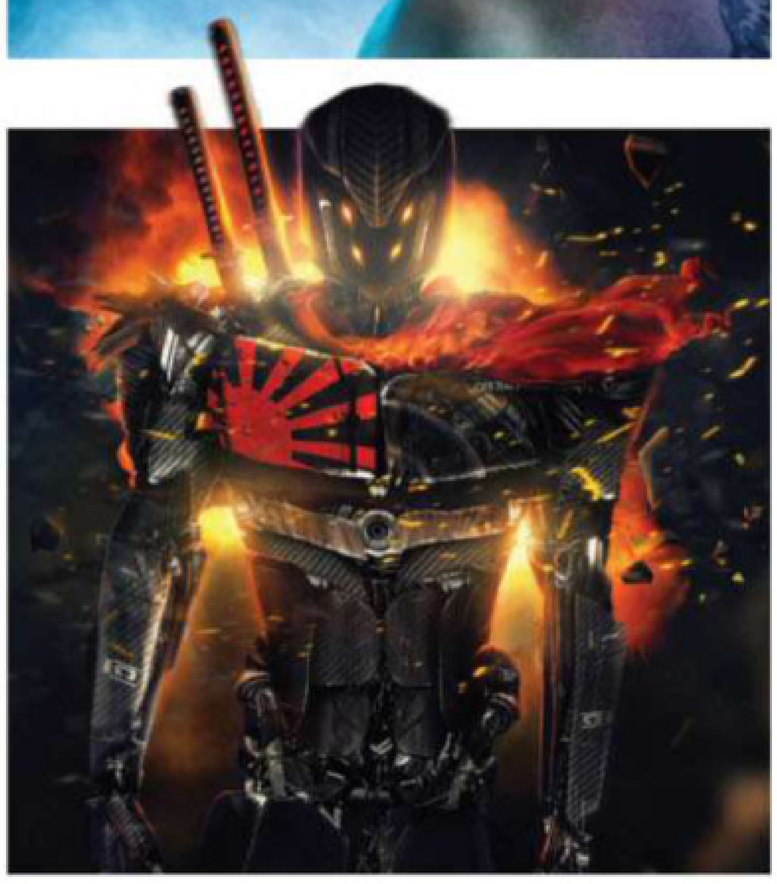


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- Master the art of making creative selections
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15 TIPS FOR CREATING
STUNNING PORTRAITS

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15 TIPS FOR CREATING

STUNNING PORTRAITS

Perfect your portraiture with these pro tips and insider secrets for retouching, photomanipulation and digital painting

Portraiture is one of the most popular and rewarding genres for photographers and artists alike, and mastering the Photoshop skills needed to produce a captivating characterisation is key. Whether you are retouching, creating a photomanipulation or making a digital painting from scratch, there isn't much that's more impressive than a well executed portrait depicting emotion and creativity.

Over the next few pages we have collected the best professional insider secrets for producing the most engaging and intriguing people studies possible.

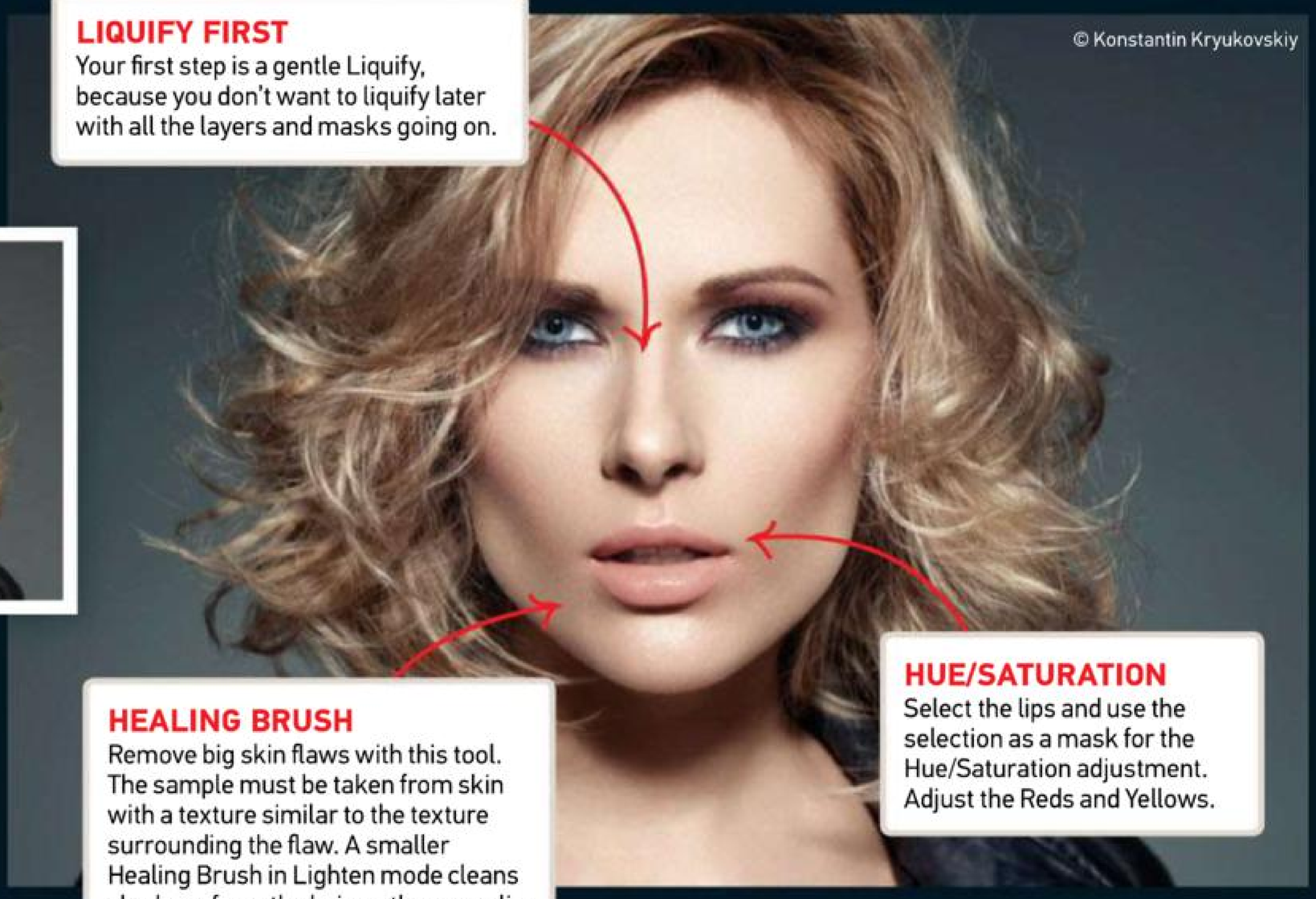
Discover the key tools needed in Photoshop for retouched perfection, as well as achieving natural-looking skin, enhancing the eyes, dealing with male skin and defining muscle highlights. We've also covered the tricks to combining different images to make the ultimate creative portrait and how to paint a stunning portrait in Photoshop.

So make sure you apply these expert tips to your own portraits.



NO1 USE KEY TOOLS FOR RETOUCHING

Check out some of the key tools used by photographer and retoucher Konstantin Kryukovskiy (**kkonst.com**) for perfect portraits.



© Konstantin Kryukovskiy

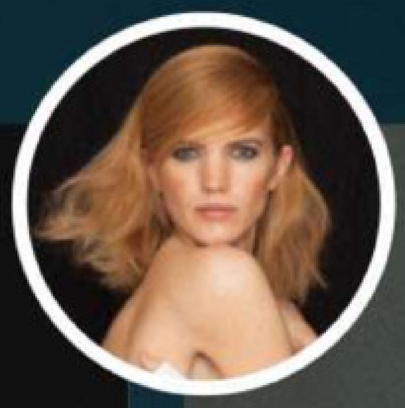
LIQUIFY FIRST
Your first step is a gentle Liquify, because you don't want to liquify later with all the layers and masks going on.

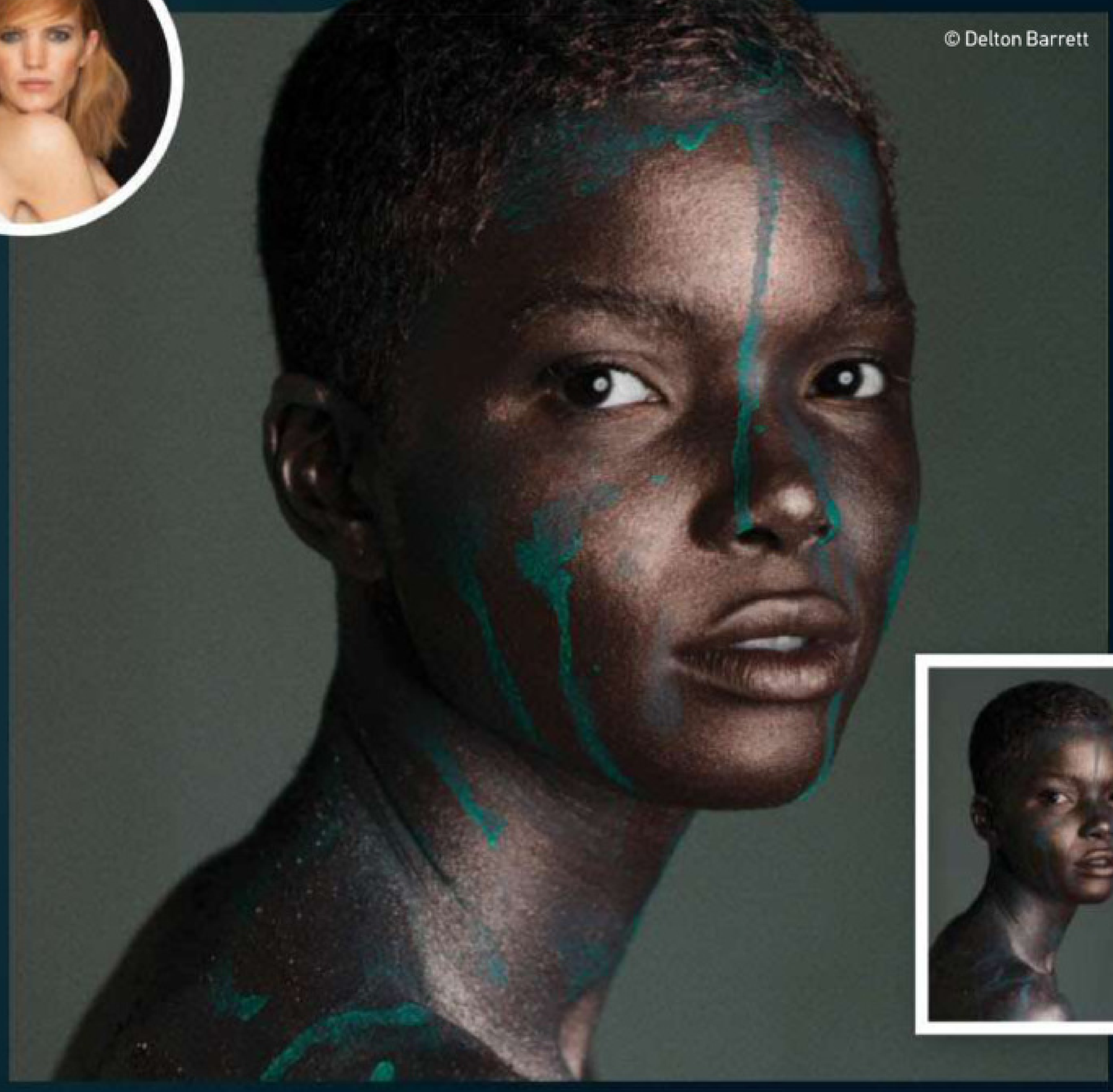
HEALING BRUSH
Remove big skin flaws with this tool. The sample must be taken from skin with a texture similar to the texture surrounding the flaw. A smaller Healing Brush in Lighten mode cleans shadows from the hair on the upper lip.

HUE/SATURATION
Select the lips and use the selection as a mask for the Hue/Saturation adjustment. Adjust the Reds and Yellows.

15 TIPS FOR CREATING STUNNING PORTRAITS







NO2 GET NATURAL-LOOKING SKIN

Over-retouching skin is a common problem. Konstantin Kryukovskiy (**kkonst.com**) suggests using Channels to achieve contrast rather than using the dodge and burn technique. However, beauty retoucher Irene Velweiss (**www.behance.net/velweiss**) has perfected the dodge and burn technique to ensure flawless but natural skin. "Retouching skin is important, as there's a fine line between beautiful natural skin and the dreaded plastic look. Duplicate your photo and call this new layer Retouch. Increase the size of the photo to 100% and start clearing away any noticeable blemishes with the Healing Brush tool. It's also a good idea to correct or reshape anything with Liquify. Now add a new layer called Dodge and Burn, set to Soft Light and 50% Grey. With the Dodge tool set to Midtones and Exposure 4%, start going over the darker areas with your brush. You'll see the skin now appears more even."

NO3 MASTER A PERFECT RETOUCHING WORKFLOW

Delton Barrett (**www.deltonbarrett.com**) talks us through his retouching process. "I set the Healing Brush tool to 25px, Spacing 25%, Current Layer, Sample and Normal mode. I remove noticeable rough spots, then create a new copy and select a Curves adjustment layer. I adjust my Levels to darken shadows and brighten eyes; for this I use the Brush tool at 30% Opacity and 30% Flow to evenly blend the effects in. Next, I use Selective Color to even out the skin tones by adjusting the Reds and Yellows. Then I use the Brush tool with 27% Opacity, 30% Flow, brush size to about the subject's eye and 0% Hardness. For each section of the skin you wish to even out, hold the Option/Alt key and select the colour of the skin tone, then begin evenly brushing over; this method can also be used to control highlights and shadows. Finally, use the Sharpen tool set at 30% and begin going over the eyes, lips and nose to create a sharper, smoother and focused portrait."



NO4 CREATE DRAMATIC PORTRAITS

Adding drama and contrast can be achieved in post-production, as shown by Irene Velweiss (**www.behance.net/velweiss**), where the main aim was to emphasise the model and her makeup. "To do this, it was necessary to remove extraneous colours from the background and jacket. To further highlight the model, we darkened the background."

After this, Velweiss moves onto the key adjustments, starting with the Liquify tool, using the Forward Warp tool on the hair, nose and collar. It is then time to begin work on the hair and skin: "We remove unwanted hair using the Clone Stamp tool. To correct the colour tone of the skin, we use Hue/Saturation: click on any red areas and drag the Yellow slider until the area matches the rest of the skin. We now need to clean the face of all skin imperfections with the Healing Brush tool.

"Finally, we create a Soft Light layer and fill with a 50% grey colour, and use a white brush to paint what we want to lighten and a black brush to darken."



© Retouching: Paul Hill; Photography Simon Derviller

No5 CHANGE AND ENHANCE COLOUR TONE

Sometimes, you will be required to enhance or change the colour tone of the original photography, which can be successfully achieved by using adjustment layers.

"In this portrait we wanted to add some extra atmosphere and more of a cooler tone to the chosen image. I did this by making a Selective Colour adjustment layer and then by boosting the Cyan and Blues colours up to give it a cooler, fresh feel. I also added a Photo Filter adjustment layer with a Cooling Filter (LBB), set to 25%," explains Paul Hill (www.paulhill-retouching.co.uk).



© Retouching: Paul Hill; Photography © Mark Enstone

No6 IMPROVE THE EYES

Professional retoucher Paul Hill states: "Eyes are an important aspect, as they are the focal point of the image, so it's important to make sure they look good. I start by cleaning the whites of the eyes with the Clone Stamp tool set to around 50% Opacity. I made a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer set to -90 Saturation and +5 Lightness and I filled the mask with black. Using a white brush set to about 50% Opacity, I painted into the whites of the eyes."



© Retouching: Paul Hill; Photography Simon Derviller

No7 RETOUCH MALE SKIN IN PORTRAITS

A lot of the retouching advice always focuses on working on female skin, but you may well be asked to work on male portraits too. Men often have a more rugged look with tougher, much less delicate skin compared to many females. "When working on male portraits, it's always important not to go too far cleaning the skin," says Paul Hill.

"It should look clean, but still maintain the character, so take out blemishes only and anything else that makes the skin tone look uneven. This is best done by using the Clone Stamp tool very carefully; I normally keep it set to 100% Opacity for this."



© Retouching: Paul Hill; Photography Simon Derviller

No8 HIGHLIGHT MUSCLE TONE

"In this particular portrait it was really important to show off the boxer's impressive physique. The lighting here is already really good, but the actual contours of the muscles needed to be enhanced.

"I did this by creating a new Curves adjustment layer and then setting the preset of the curve to Lighter on a Normal blending mode. I then filled the mask with black. Now using a soft white brush set to about 10% Opacity, I painted the highlights into the mask giving more definition and contrast to the muscles," explains Paul Hill.

No9 ADD CREATIVE EFFECTS TO YOUR PORTRAITS

Graphic designer Aly Bassam (www.behance.net/AlyBassam) explains how he created this striking artwork using textures and Photoshop tools.



SCRIBBLE LINES
There are various hatches and sketching effects in the artwork due to the use of the Pencil tool.

TEXTURE
I used many different and strong colours. The textures here give the look and feel of a painting due to the use of many splatter brushes.

COLOUR BALANCE
I have worked in a way to control the colours and match them together, focusing on magenta. I have also balanced the image by repeating some colours in small amounts.

COLOUR
I used many different and strong colours, including primary ones, to enrich the picture. I also used different blending modes, such as Overlay and Normal, with different opacities.

BOLD BLACK LINES
These lines are here in order to control the colour strength since I have used such vibrant colours. To give the picture some balance, I have added a vertical and horizontal bold line.

© Aly Bassam. All Rights Reserved

No10 WORK WITH MULTIPLE ELEMENTS

The best creative portrait compositions use a wide variety of assets. Emi Haze (**www.emihaze.com**) is known for his distinctive art, which is focused around portrait photos. "My artwork starts from a photo and the first phase is its retouching. Afterwards, I digitally import various handmade elements, such as scratches, ink marks, acrylic or watercolour stains. All the blending modes, layer masks, adjustments layers and so on that I use make the starting image less digital and more similar to a painting or drawing. This phase of manual elaboration is then merged with the strictly digital one. Selecting parts of different images, I try to blend the human body with nature and its four elements – fire, air, water and earth – using the double-exposure technique. This is achieved using blending modes, such as Multiply, Screen and Overlay, in combination with various masks and selections. One of the distinguishing features of my portraits is the clouds. To create them, I select parts from different photos or use some custom brushes."



© Emi Haze

StoreMags



© Christos Mavridis



© Emi Haze

No11 BLEND PHOTOS WITH PAINT SPLASHES

A great way to work with portraits is to add some tangible brush effects – the contrast between the perfectly retouched, crisp photography and the fluid painterly strokes adds interest and creativity.

Christos Mavridis (**christosmavridis.com**) worked on this image from photo shoot to Photoshop, keeping the original photograph as raw as possible in terms of technical aspects, such as stylised lighting, makeup and costume.

"This was to have a clear picture of the human expression and sentiment that could be projected by the subject, which would be the inspiration for the final artwork." In Photoshop, the idea was to combine that raw photography with different elements: "I started by masking out the subject and retouched the skin using the Spot Healing Brush tool and the Patch tool. I used specific brushes to create ink splashes, creating the background that would be the base for something abstract to come out of this composition. I incorporated photographic elements, merging real paint strokes using mask layers and the Transform tools.

"Finally, by using adjustment layers, I aimed to make the colours more vivid and vibrant, and bring up the contrast. I also added artificial noise and grain using the Noise filter to create a more realistic texture."

© Aly Bassam. All Rights Reserved

№12

CREATE DOUBLE-EXPOSURE EFFECTS

This special effect involves blending a portrait image with a different image, often a landscape. Aly Bassam (**www.behance.net/AlyBassam**) explains: "The most unique thing in double-exposure work is the extraordinary creativity it holds by how you can blend a portrait with landscapes or nature. I make sure the facial features stay clear. The tools I use are mostly the Eraser and Brush tools with layer masks. I use several copies of the same picture, but each copy is set to a different Opacity and blending mode, for example Normal, Lighten, Screen, Multiply and so on. I use a clipping mask on some layers to take the shape and form of the portrait. Finally, I add some extra colour effects to give it some refreshment and an artistic spirit."

storemags.com







NO13 MAKE USE OF THE CHALK BRUSH

The default brushes in Photoshop can be perfect for building up digital portraits, and for illustrator and concept artist Suzanne van Pelt (**anathematixs.deviantart.com**) the Chalk brush is essential to her work, alongside other basic brushes: "Right now the brush I use the most, would have to be the 36 Chalk brush, with Opacity and Flow set to Pen Pressure. I love how it leaves texture, but still blends really well. You can use it in different ways and it works for almost every kind of surface; be it skin, hair, clothing or even armour.

"If there are any areas of the painting that I want or need a smoother blend on, I will switch to a Soft Round brush, with the same settings. If I am looking for a more textured look, I might turn on Opacity Jitter for a more random brushstroke. This works extremely well on hair, for example. On occasion I will use a few custom brushes for things like freckles, but I prefer to do most of the texturing by hand."

NO14 PAINT A PORTRAIT IN PHOTOSHOP

Digital painter and illustrator Thiago Moura Januário (**www.behance.net/userthiago**) guides us step-by-step through his painting process:

Line drawing

01 My first stage is the line drawing. I build up the structure of the face, thinking about the planes of the surface and their relationship with the light source in the environment. I like to draw with a brush at a low Opacity (40-60%) and Flow (10-30%). The kind of brush at this stage is not important; by controlling the Opacity, Flow and Size, any one can be good to draw with.



Add in colour

02 I start to work on colours with textured brushes, trying to emulate the traditional painting feel. I don't use photo textures; some brushes already have a great texture and they can be used to form a canvas feel in a painting. I use the Smudge tool to do some effects as a brush, with Color Dynamics on for some random colour variation.



Define the portrait

03 I start to define the drawing with simple brushes, like the hard Round brush and airbrush. I use the rounded brush with a pores texture to bring realism to the face. The Color Balance adjustment is great to bring together the painting in some cases, but as you more accurately choose your colours, you will use the adjustments layers less.



© 2015 Thiago Moura Januário

NO15 CREATE LIGHT AND TONE

When it comes to painting a good digital portrait, a lot relies on the realism of the lighting setup and contrast. Illustrator Mélanie Delon (**www.melaniedelon.com**) says: "I always start with a quick pencil sketch, then switch to Photoshop to rework the sketch with colours. I paint this part with a basic, round, textured brush; something big, so I can't lose myself in details and stay focused with the general shapes and basic light. Once the light and composition are set, I can go in with the details."

Delon tries to start with a basic colour scheme, adding more if needed. "The light is really important in a portrait; it will bring volume and life to a face. If there is no background, the light must make the character stand out. I always start with a simple lighting setup, the main one, and add a second diffused one later.

"To get a realistic face, I never hesitate to add lots of texture and details. Texture brings life, so it's crucial to add some to the skin, hair and eyes. To do this, I have a bunch of textured brushes; some of them are soft ones and some others are dotted ones to imitate the skin pores. I usually use both."



On the FileSilo

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Essentials

Time taken
2 hours

Expert



Andre Villanueva

"The whole concept of selections used to terrify me. I would purposefully avoid selection tools, opting instead to apply edits canvas-wide. Obviously I didn't get very far doing this.

"As I gained more experience and confidence working with selections, I realised that they are integral to digital imaging, and I now use them in just about every piece I work on.

"I discovered Photoshop while studying web design. After graduating, I taught for five years in the media arts department. I'm now art director for a tech company in southeast US, soothing my inner instructor by sharing techniques with readers."

For more of Andre's excellent work head to **www.000-000-0000.com**.



Take control of selections

Use selections, masks and more to retouch a portrait and add an explosive dispersion effect

What better way to make an impact than to fashion an explosively delicious dispersion effect?

Begin with a portrait and enlist a cadre of selection tools along with brushes, masks and blend modes to retouch. Selections are one of the cornerstones of Photoshop editing. Being adept at using all the selection tools will enable you to choose the best one(s) for a given situation. Sometimes you'll combine tools and features, like starting with the Quick Selection tool and following with Refine Edge. Speaking of Refine Edge, this fantastic feature is the successor to the old Extract plug-in. It's a potent and welcome ally when selecting hair.

For the dispersion effect, you'll team lassos with the venerable Pen tool. Eschewing the popular technique of liquifying a copy of the subject and masking with various brushes, you'll instead create the pieces. These will be a combination of facial bits selected with lassos and vector shapes built with the Pen tool. After forming several seed groups, you'll copy these and redeploy to quickly populate the colourful eruption. Particles courtesy of **mediamilitia.com** and other debris will also be tossed into the fray.



Smoothen skin

01 Open 'Model.psd' from the FileSilo. On new layers above the model, paint with a soft-edged brush at low opacity, using the Eyedropper tool to select approximate colours, hold Option/Alt while using the Brush tool for spring-loaded access to the Eyedropper.



Boost lips and eyes

02 Add a Color Fill layer and choose Solid Color. Pick #f861b0. Set to Color blend mode. Click the mask and invert it (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Paint with white to colour lips. Repeat for the eyes using #f861b0, #f433ab, and #fab2ea. Set these to Overlay. Lower opacity to reduce if needed.



Enhance eyebrows

03 On a new layer, zoom in on the eyebrows. Go to Select>Color Range. On canvas, Shift+click on hairs. Option/Alt+click to remove. Adjust selection range with Fuzziness. Using the Lasso tool, hold Option/Alt+Shift, click and drag, encircling the eyebrow. Add a Color Fill (#f861b0).

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Forgotten selection shortcuts? **Check the Options bar!**



Expert tip

Add complex shapes

For creating complex shapes with complete ease, use the Pen tool set to Path to plot precise outlines of flowing or complex shapes. (Set to Shape to create vector shapes.) Click to create corner points, click and drag to create smooth points. Close the path by clicking on the origin. To convert to a selection, press Cmd/Ctrl+Return/Enter.

Continue to click or click and drag to add to the selection. To remove from the selection, simply hold Option/Alt as you use the tool.



Select hair

04 Create a new layer at the top. With the Quick Selection tool – tick Sample All Layers in the options bar – make a rough selection of the hair. Use [and] to decrease or increase the brush size. Start with a larger brush size for the initial pass-through, then use smaller sizes as you get down to the details. Zoom in and out to get a good look.



Refine Edge

05 Continue to work on the selection. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it's a good idea to get as decent a selection as you can get before continuing on to Refine Edge. Go to Select>Refine Edge (Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+R). Use the Refine Radius tool to paint around the edges. Zoom in and out as needed and size brush with [and].



Colour hair

06 For Output To, choose Selection. Add a Color Fill layer. Pick #f861b0. Set to Color blend mode. Refine the mask. Duplicate the Color Fill layer twice. Double-clicking on the first set to a darker colour (#861657). Set the other to a paler one (#fab2ea). Edit each mask to blend the colours throughout the hair. Save Model.psd.



Place model and make holes

07 Open 'Final.psd'. Go to File>Place Embedded, grab the model. Add a layer mask and paint black. To create the holes, use the Polygonal Lasso tool to plot the jagged shapes then fill with black on new layers. You can also use the Pen tool. Add Inner Glow layer styles using #f810c4. Adjust the glows' Opacity, Noise, Choke and Size.



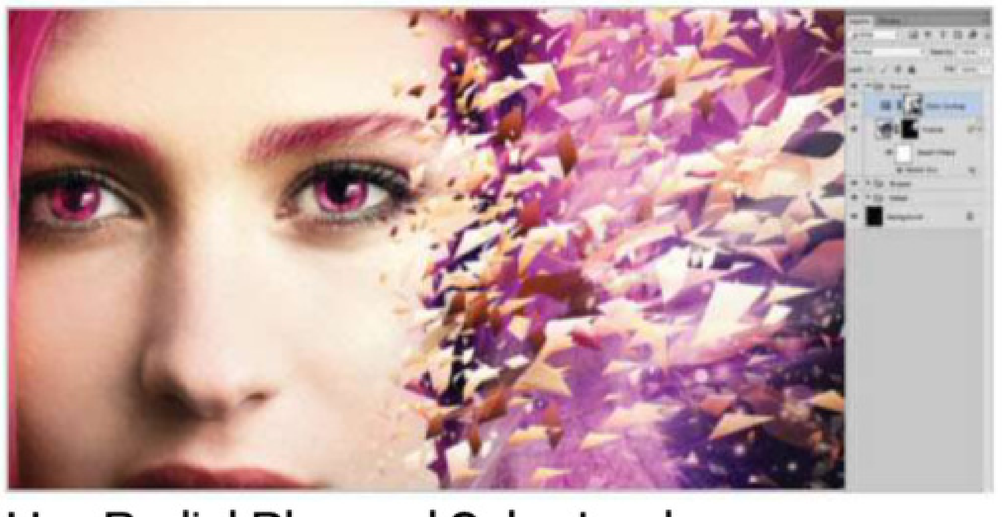
Create pieces

08 Click on the model thumbnail. Use the Lasso tool to create a freeform selection of a bit of the face. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and move above the holes. Go back to the model layer and repeat. Use the Polygonal Lasso to create shards. Also, create coloured shape layers with the Pen tool. Continue to build up.



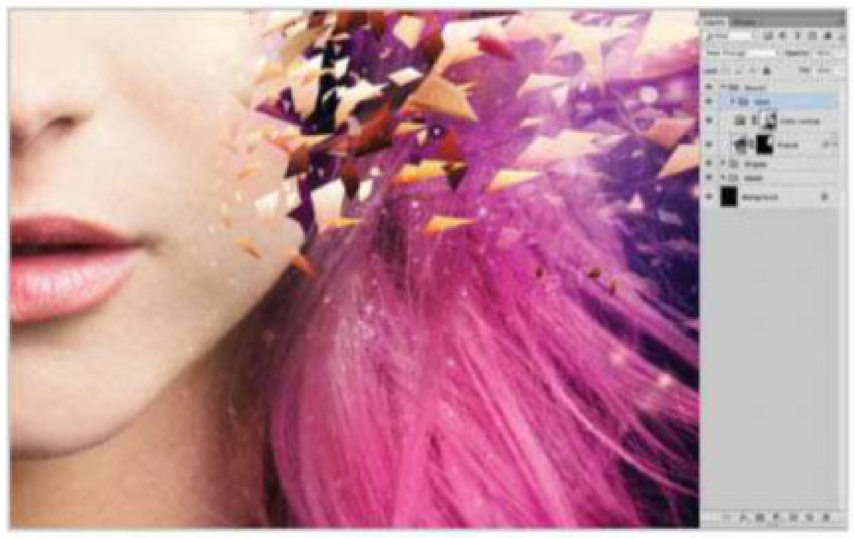
Finalise dispersion

09 Adorn pieces with layer styles like Bevel & Emboss and Outer Glow. If desired, place other images for variety, for example 'MM_Light.jpg', 'MM_Particles.jpg' and 'Optical.jpg'. Use masks and experiment with blend modes to mix in. Duplicate groups and arrange the duplicates. Free Transform whole groups or individual pieces.



Use Radial Blur and Color Lookup

10 Place 'Fractal.jpg' above the fragment storm. Go Filter>Blur>Radial Blur. Set Amount: 60, Blur Method: Zoom, Quality: Good. Set to Linear Dodge (Add). Drop Opacity to 60%. Using Free Transform, rotate counter-clockwise. Option/Alt+click the 'Add layer mask' button and paint back with white. Click 'Create new fill or adjustment' button, choose Color Lookup. Pick 'filmstock_50.3dl'. Paint black in the mask to reduce.



Add some stars

11 Place 'Stars.jpg' and set to Overlay. Move it around until you can visualise some of the stars overlaid upon an area within the flying shards. After confirming the place, Option/Alt+click the 'Add layer mask' button to hide it, then paint back with white to add the stars. Place more stars and repeat the process, or duplicate, move, and edit each mask.



Continue tweaking colour

12 Now darken things a bit. Click on the 'Create new fill' or Adjustment button again and choose Color Lookup. Pick '3Strip.look.' Optionally, use a lowered opacity to reduce. Duplicate with Cmd/Ctrl+J. Set the duplicate adjustment layer's blend mode to Multiply. Click the mask and invert (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Paint back with white to darken.

Expert tip

Select with Refine Edge

Introduced in CS5, Refine Edge is teeming with settings to aid you in selecting complex things like hair. Start with a rough selection, then go to Select>Refine Edge. Use the Refine Radius tool to brush around the object's edges. Smooth eases hills and valleys in the selection. Feather blurs the transition. Increase Contrast to make soft-edged transitions more abrupt. Use Shift Edge to bring soft-edged borders inward or outward. This is a quick way to reduce unwanted fringe colour.



Refine composition

13 Select the top layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E. Ctrl/right-click and choose Convert to Smart Object. Filters applied to the smart object will be applied as non-destructively. Go to Filter>Render>Lens Flare. In the Lens Flare dialog, click in the preview to place the lens flare. Choose from the four lenses, then adjust Brightness.



Add more lens flares

14 Smart objects can have multiple smart filters applied to them. Add more lens flares by repeatedly going to Filter>Render>Lens Flare (Cmd/Ctrl+F). Vary the placement of the lens flares and experiment with the different types. To edit a lens flare, double-click on it underneath the layer. Toggle visibility with the eye icon.



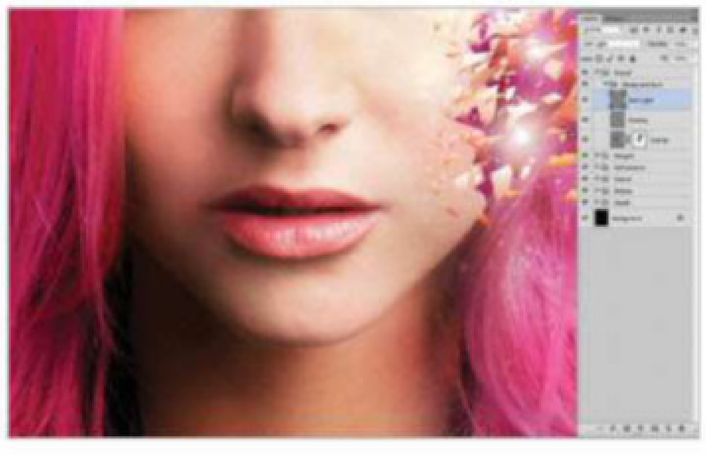
Use Camera Raw

15 Merge layers again and convert to a smart object. Go to Filter>Camera Raw Filter. This filter has loads of settings on the right to fine-tune your image. To produce a dreamy feel, slide Clarity leftward to -50. Explore the other settings if desired. Click OK when done. Paint black in the Smart Filters mask to peel off the dreamy aura in areas.



Sharpen up

16 Merge layers and convert to a smart object. Apply a Camera Raw Filter. Increase Clarity to +30. Under the Detail tab, increase Amount to 90 and Luminance to 30. Click OK. Paint black in the Smart Filters mask to reduce. Alternatively, you can paint on the sharpness. Invert the Smart Filters mask, then paint white to sharpen areas.



Dodge and Burn

17 On a new layer go to Edit>Fill and choose 50% Gray for Contents. Set to Overlay. To dodge, paint with white. Start at a low brush opacity and work your way up. To burn, paint with black. You can work in stages across multiple layers. If you need to remove black or white and restore to 50% Grey, paint with #808080.



Finalise

18 If part of the face looks too wan, apply a Color Fill layer (#e8947a) set to Linear Burn. Drop to a low opacity. Invert the mask. Paint with white at low opacity to add. To amp up the supernatural vibe, add a Color Fill (#e26ee6) and set to Soft Light. Invert the mask. To apply a slight cast, add a Color Fill (#be0bde) and lower Opacity to around 8%.

Advanced Construct a robot with your photos



On the FileSilo

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Essentials

Time taken
2 hours

Expert



Moe Pike Soe

"Whenever I work on a piece of art, one of my main focuses is how the different light sources affect each of the objects in the composition. Depending on the location of the object, the reflection of the light is varied. If an object is directly in front of the light source, I would brush around the edges of the object to create a rim-light effect.

"I'm a self-taught freelance digital artist and designer from Yangon, Myanmar. I started using Photoshop in junior year of my high school and started my career in 2011. I've had the opportunity to work with clients from around the world including international corporations such as Nike and Nissan. I am currently developing my skills at the Parsons New School of Design in New York."

Construct a robot with your photos



Master the fundamental techniques to create a mechanical robot using only photos

Before we begin the tutorial, close your eyes and imagine a robot that has ninja assassin skills. Its parts are made of bulletproof metal and carbon fibres along with bulletproof glass. If you like the sound of this, we'll show you how to bring this super-cool character to life!

In this tutorial, we will be going over fundamental techniques using Photoshop to combine and transform photos into an otherworldly and futuristic character.

We will use various Transform tools, blend modes, adjustment layers and painting techniques in order to create a dynamic scene with this larger-than-life mech robot.

In order to follow the tutorial without any trouble, an advanced knowledge of the Transform tools, adjustment layers, blend modes and Brush tools is required. Using a tablet is also extremely encouraged as it will speed up the entire process of cutting photos and painting, as well as increase your accuracy and enhance the overall finish. We'll guide you through step by step, from constructing body parts and armour, to lighting, colour and refining the key details.



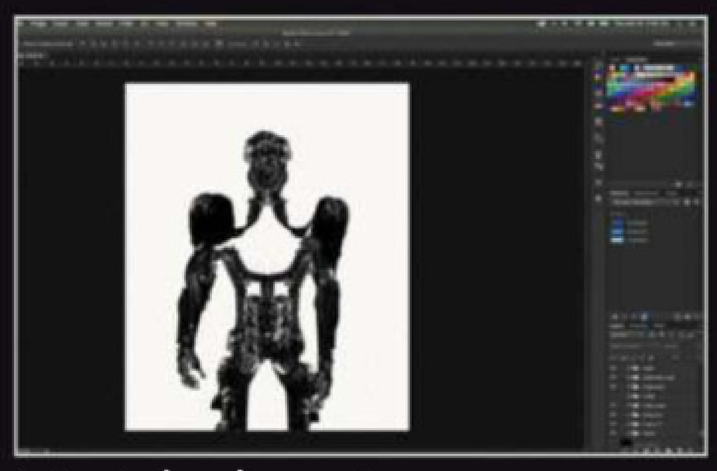
Draw an initial sketch

01 Start off with a sketch. Using reference photos will help with determining the proportion and pose of the mech. After the sketch, look for stock photos of car parts, engines, cables and vehicles – armoured cars and tanks are great. The sketch and stock photos are on the FileSilo.



Prepare the canvas

02 Once you have a sketch or the one supplied, start bashing photos in Photoshop to build the bottom layer of the robot: the insides. Create a new document at 240mm x 310mm. Set the background colour to grey at #d7d7d7. Import the sketch and set it above the background layer.



Mimic body parts

03 Basic knowledge of the human anatomy will help because you'll need to follow the shapes of the muscles, bones and joints. We will also need to reflect on how it moves. For the joints of the robot, we'll use spherical parts to show how the limbs can move at different angles.

Expert tip

Remain patient

Creating a mech using photos can be tedious because of blending the different images all with different lighting and perspectives. Maintaining a high level of patience and attention to detail is key to creating a slick and professional-looking piece. It is also really important to spend time before you start collecting enough stock images to enable you to complete the piece without having to stop and start too often to maintain your flow.



Build the organs

04 Build the parts one by one. When cutting out the stock photos, precision is not needed since most of the parts are going to be covered with armour, but we'll still need to blend them in later. Use the original shapes in the stock to resemble the anatomy of the robot. If the shapes don't fit, press Cmd/Ctrl+T>Right-click>Warp to transform the layer.



Blend the organs

05 The parts will have different lighting and colours, so blend them by using adjustment layers. We are looking for dark shadows, bright midtones and reduced highlights. Create a new layer, grab a soft brush, set the blend mode to Soft Light and paint in shadows and highlights to the body.



Place the armour

06 Placing the armour on top of the skeletal frame is similar to creating the internal parts, but we will be painting more and need to be more precise. When cutting out stock photos, create a layer mask instead of deleting it so you can come back later and edit it if you need to.



Add armour texture

07 We'll use different texture and painting techniques to create the look of having different materials, first with translucent material. Grab a brush at 50% Opacity and paint over the object on its layer mask. Then, create a new layer, clip mask and paint in shadows and highlights with a Soft Light blend mode.



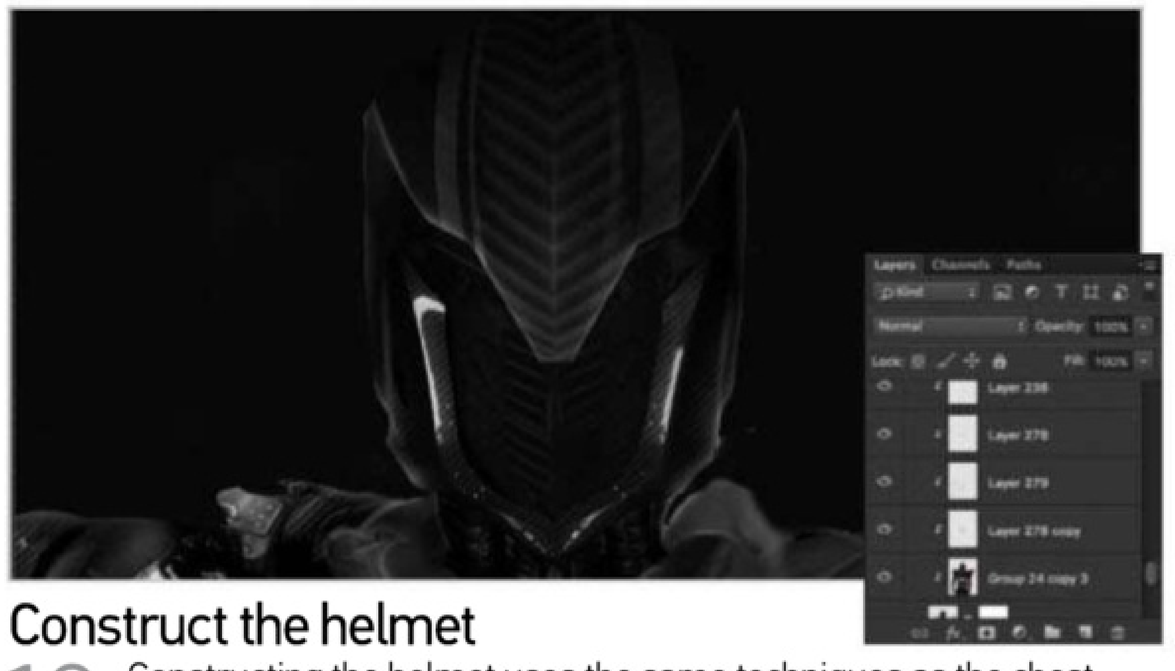
Carbon fibre plate

08 Download a carbon fibre pattern for Photoshop. Double-click the armour plate to go into layer style settings. Go to patterns and choose the carbon fibre pattern. Change the blend mode to Overlay. Other values can be tweaked. Always create a new layer with Soft Light blend mode to paint in shadow and light to blend the armour in.



Assemble the chest plate

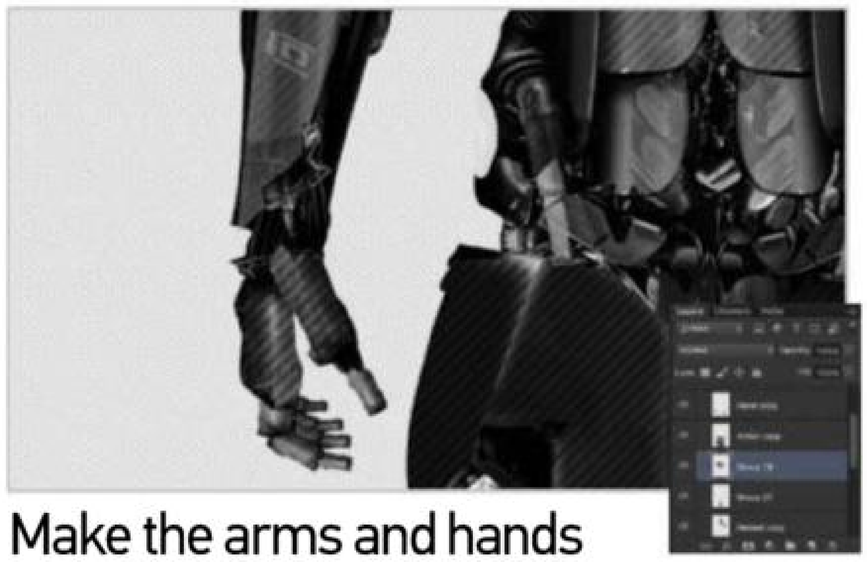
09 The chest plate includes the different textures. When building the chest plate, be sure to add thickness to the plate. To easily do it, we can paint highlights on the edges of the plate. After applying textures and shading to the cutouts, we will decals to stylise the chest plate.



Construct the helmet

10 Constructing the helmet uses the same techniques as the chest plate, but we'll use car body parts to assemble the jawline. Don't just copy and flip the parts, but transform using the Warp tool and the Perspective tool to add depth. To create round parts for the top, use Filter>Distort>Spherize. Add shadow to the overlapping parts.

Storeflags.com



Make the arms and hands

11 Create shapes according to the number of joints you can find on your hand. Reference your hands for the size and placement of the fingers and its pose. Create a layer and add shading to each finger to blend them in. When adding plates to the arms, do not cover up the joints of the internal parts. Leave space between each armour plate.



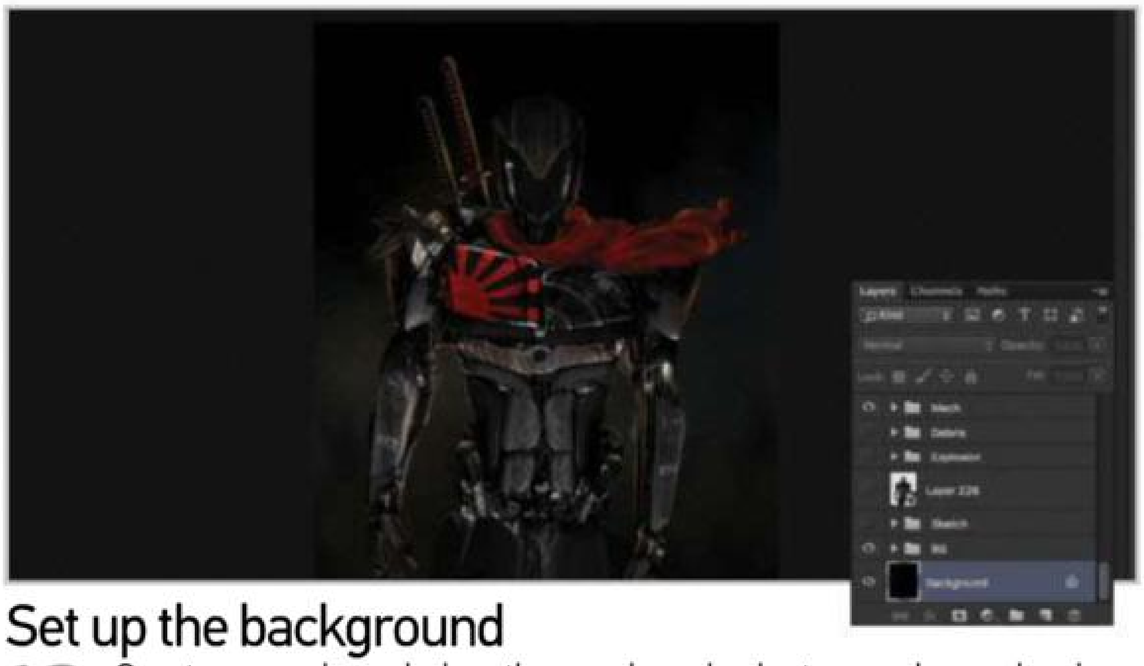
Clean up the mech

12 Check all the layer masks to make sure they were cut cleanly. If a part looks too bright, turn it down by adjusting Lightness value in a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Use a Soft Light blend mode in-brush to change the tones. Group all the layers and create a smart object.

Expert tip

Study anatomy

Creating a realistic mech is not all about looking good, but it's about how it functions as well. Extra knowledge about anatomy will help a lot in creating the basic skeletal structure. Study the shapes of the muscles and bones to understand how each works and adapt it to create different parts of the mech. Following the basic structure of the human anatomy will help to ground your robot firmly in reality and be easier for your viewer to understand.



Set up the background

13 Create a new layer below the mech and select a smoke or cloud brush. Change its Opacity to 70% and paint from the bottom to the top of the canvas. Mix the colour of the brush from light grey to black to create a different depth of smoke. Import a stock image of an explosion, preferably with a black background and set to Screen. Place it behind the mech. Grab a soft brush and paint above the explosion to create a glow.



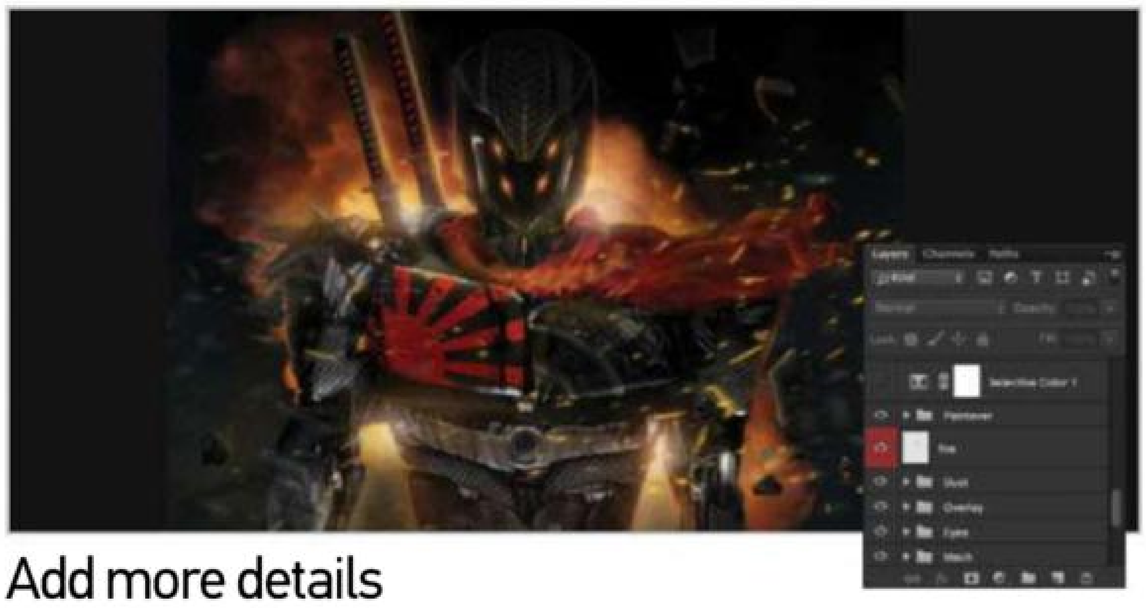
Shade the mech

14 On a new layer, clip mask it to the mech layer. Change the blend mode to Overlay. Change the Opacity of your brush to 50% and Flow to 60%. Select a soft brush and paint with black and white to create more contrast. If a part overlaps another, it will need lighter shading. Use a small brush (15px) to create highlights. Paint around the edges of the mech to add rim light.



Add details and make adjustments

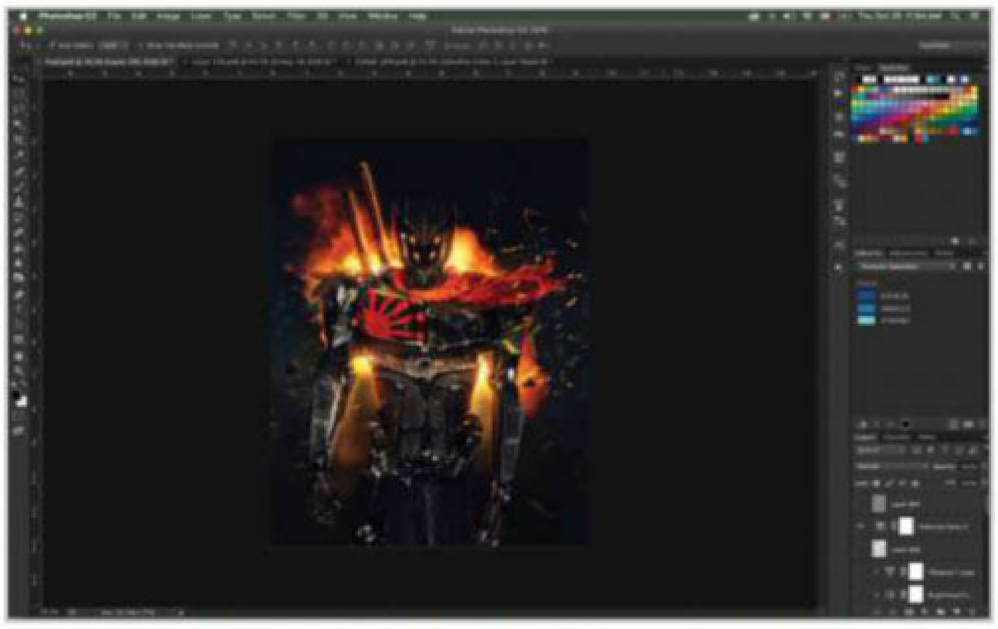
15 Create a new layer on top of the mech. Select a soft, round brush with the midtone colour of the explosion layer. Set blend mode to Screen and paint on the border of the mech and the explosion. Create shapes between the explosion and mech layer. Paint edges and contour with a small, soft brush. And Filter>Blur>Motion Blur to create debris behind the mech.



Add more details

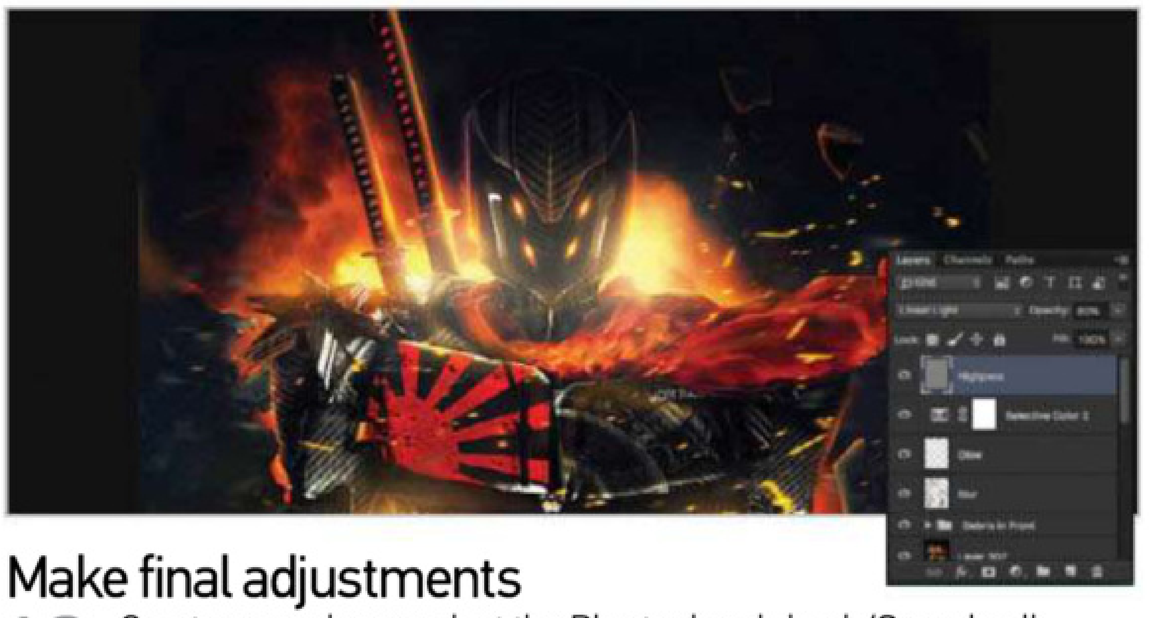
16 Create a new layer, then make a diamond shape and rotate. Copy and paste it four times and place it on the helmet. Double-click the layer and create an outerglow with the Opacity of 40%. Ctrl/right-click> Copy Layer Style and paste it to other layers. After the eyes are set, create a new layer and paint thin strokes at horizontal angles to create fire sparks. Then add Motion Blur with a Screen blend mode.

Advanced Construct a robot with your photos



Correct the colour

17 Use a Selective Color adjustment layer to add blue to the shadows and change the vibrance of red in the canvas. Adjust the values under the Red, Neutral and Black tabs. Create an Exposure adjustment layer to brighten up the artwork. Create a Vibrance adjustment layer and increase the values of Vibrance.



Make final adjustments

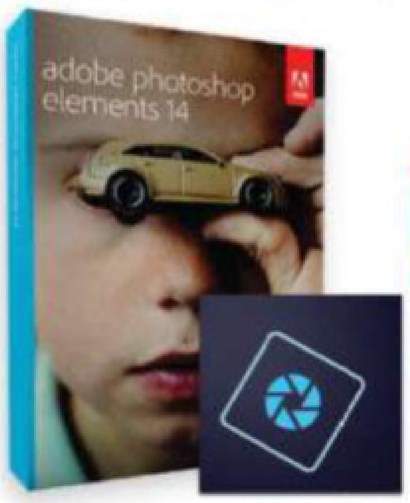
18 Create a new layer, select the Blur tool and check 'Sample all layers'. Paint around the edges of the mech; this helps blend it with the background. Create a new layer and merge (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+E). Grab the Dodge tool and change the target to midtone and paint around the canvas to lighten up midtones around the highlights. Create a new layer and merge again. Go to Filter>Other>High Pass and set the value when you can see thin details of the artwork. Set blend mode to Linear Light.

Expert tip Experiment with blend modes

Using different blend modes can have various effects on the layers and brushes that you use in your artwork. Test out what works on different backgrounds. Soft Light and Overlay is great way of changing the shading and adding colours to the scene. While Screen and Linear Dodge is great for adding light sources and sparks. Each blend mode has its own properties, but sometimes each one comes with a nice surprise. So it's better to try out and experiment with different blend modes yourself to see which one fits the best and creates the most interesting effect.



Elements creative



18 pages of practical guides

Essential techniques
Follow the step-by-step tutorials

Elements

File Edit Image Enhance Layer Select Filter View Window Help

Create more in Elements...

Tool focus: Select with the Lasso tool 86
Creative project: Make your own invitations 88
Photo edit: Add planets to skies 92
Digital art: Blend illustration with reality 98
Q&A: Common problems in Elements 102

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**



Surreal art...

LEARN HOW TO

CREATE SURREAL COMPOSITIONS

Practise your compositing skills in Elements by turning fire into water to produce a watery candle p94

What does it mean?

REFINE EDGE – The Refine Edge tool tidies up your selections by feathering the edges and smoothing your subjects. It can be used on any selection and it's a useful tool to touch up your objects. Use the 'Output To' drop-down menu to either keep with a selection or mask your selection in a single step.

On the FileSilo

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Tool focus...

Select with the Lasso tool

Use the simplest of selection tools to draw around objects

Selections are one of the most worthwhile things to master in Elements. If you can select an object neatly, you can convince someone looking at your composition that anything belongs anywhere: get it wrong however, and you'll create subjects with blurry and unconvincing edges. There's a fine line between the two, but there are Selection tools in Elements that can help you get it right. Perfect selections are absolutely key to creating realistic imagery and compositions, and selection skills are often the tell as to whether the creator is experienced or a complete beginner.

The Lasso tool is a perfect starting point if you're just learning how to select an object. It's rather like the Pencil tool, and can be used to drag an outline roughly around an object of your choice. It's particularly good if you're just looking to tidy up a selection by removing a chunk, and some people also use it for making really rough sketches in Elements before building upon them.

It can be used in more sophisticated projects too though, and if you have a graphics tablet, the Lasso tool can prove to be even more useful and precise than you might have first thought. Accuracy is key after all.

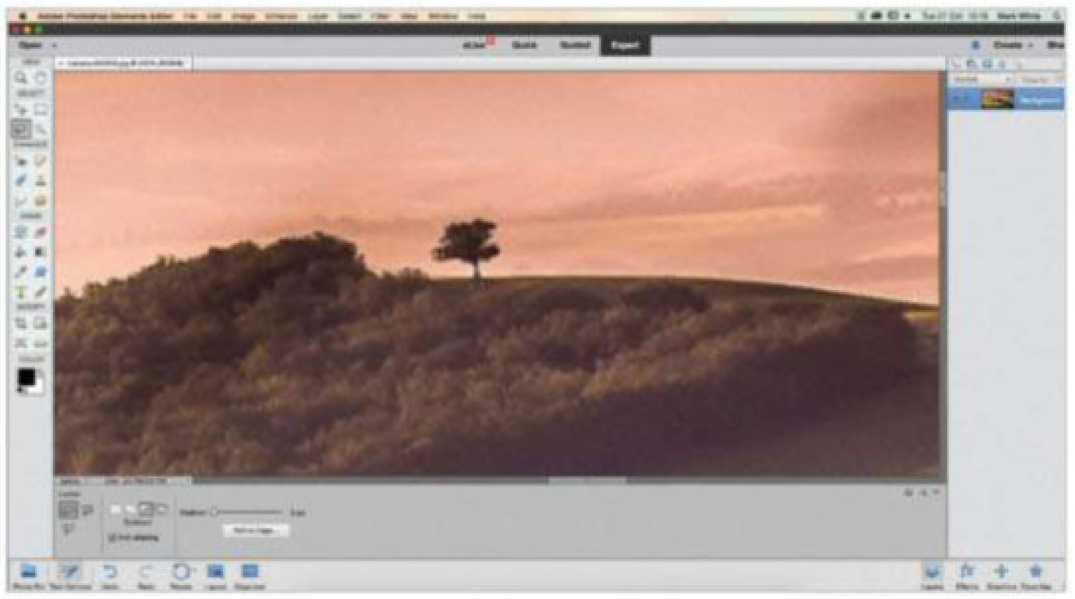
Now let's check out how to make a basic selection with the tool: remember, the selection is just the beginning, and you can use the Lasso and Refine Edge to improve it even further.

Master freehand selections Use the freedom of drawing to select your objects



Start drawing

01 To begin, all you need to do is start at the edge of your selection, then click and hold down the cursor until you've drawn around the entire edge of what you're selecting. Zoom in to get a closer look and hit the Spacebar, click and drag to move the canvas.



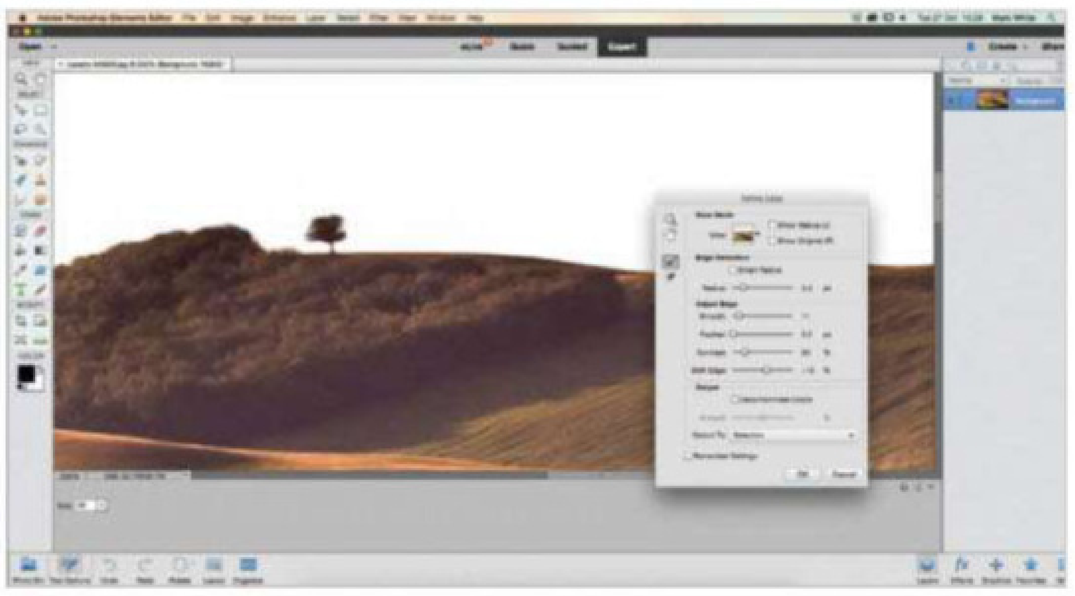
Subtract from selection

02 Once you've created some kind of selection, you might want to get a little closer and just tidy up the edges you missed. Hit the Subtract button in the bottom panel and draw around edges to take them out of the selection.



Add to selection

03 You can do the same thing to objects you want to add: simply use the Add icon in the same panel as the Subtract. Switch between the two at once too: Option/Alt+Click to subtract objects from the selection and Shift+Click to add them.



Refine Edge

04 Once you've finished with your selection, click the Refine Edge box. Here, you can touch up the rougher edges of your selection by using the Edge Detection, along with the Adjust Edge sliders to get a softer, more natural edge.

Shortcut
Option/Alt+Click to subtract objects from the selection

The other Lassos Learn how to select objects with even more precision



Polygonal Lasso

The Lasso can give you the freedom to draw, particularly if you use a graphics tablet, but it isn't good at creating straight lines. Luckily, the Polygonal Lasso is useful for this: click to lay a point and you can make blocky shapes around your objects. The closer you zoom in, the better you can negotiate curves.



Magnetic Lasso

The Magnetic Lasso takes the best things about the other two Lasso tools, as well as adding intuition to your selections. The Magnetic Lasso automatically snaps to your edges to create a smooth, curved edge, and you can undo the last point you created, or accidentally created, by hitting the Backspace key.

Creative project...

Make your own invitations

Add a touch of personalisation to your event with text, layers and effects in Elements

Photoshop and Elements are software packages that are useful for so much more than just creating artwork for the internet. It's possible to create amazing designs, obviously, but where's the fun in getting creative if you can't share them?

A creative project like an invitation is the perfect way to showcase your editing skills. You can make them for any occasion, fill them with any text and whichever shapes you like; you can even choose the size and orientation. Elements has all kinds of tools and features perfect for these kinds of projects, and there are countless ways to personalise your invitation and tailor it to your event.

For this project, we've chosen a minimal template with just a few text boxes and simple embellishments. The idea for this invitation is to create a striking colour theme of just a few shades and to present the information in an easy-to-read, yet stylish manner. Should you be creating a birthday-party invitation though, you might choose to insert balloon shapes instead of stars, or if it's more of a festive theme, why not choose snowflakes?

Let's take a closer look at how to create the perfect invitation in Elements, in three easy stages.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

PRINT IT OUT
Print your invitation yourself, fold it over and actually physically send it to your friends.

Shortcut
Hold Option/Alt when cropping to crop out from the centre





STAGE 1

Prepare the project

Create the template before you fill it

Setting up is important in all kinds of Elements projects. If you're creating a composition, you might want to put the images in place before you mask them, and if you're about to digitally paint, you might want to make a sketch first.

An invitation is no different. For the first three steps, make sure your canvas size is big enough and that you have enough bleed. If not, the invitation will fall a bit flat once it's printed.

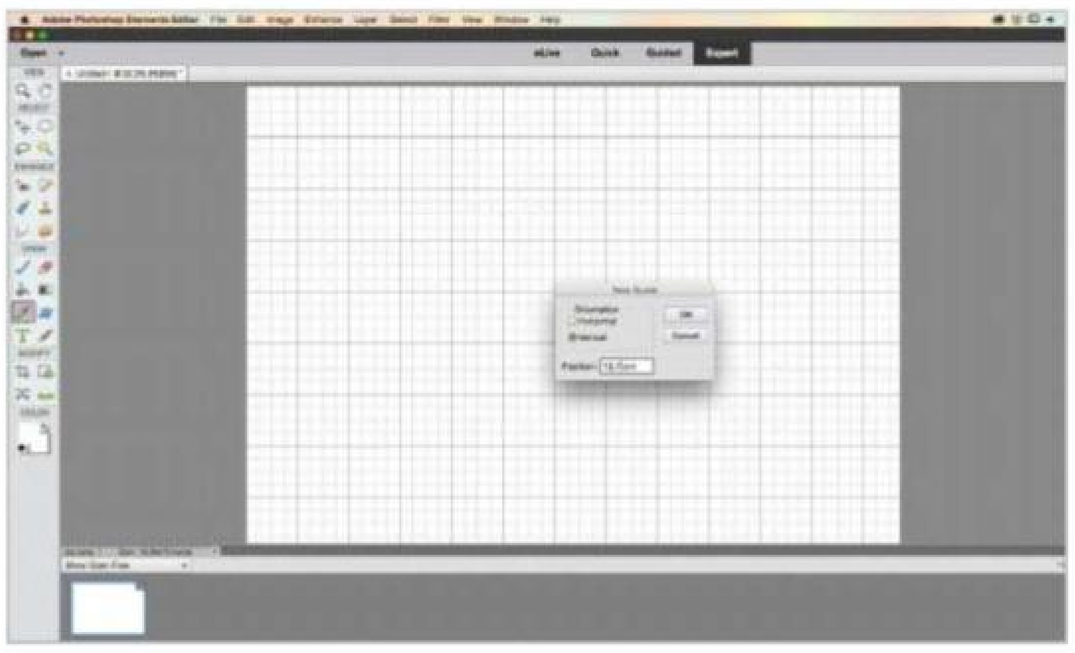
What does it mean?

GUIDES – The guides in Elements are just basic sky-blue lines that you can position anywhere in the document. Choose a number of centimetres that you want them to be, either vertically or horizontally and they will just remain in the document for you to use to snap objects to or help position layers.



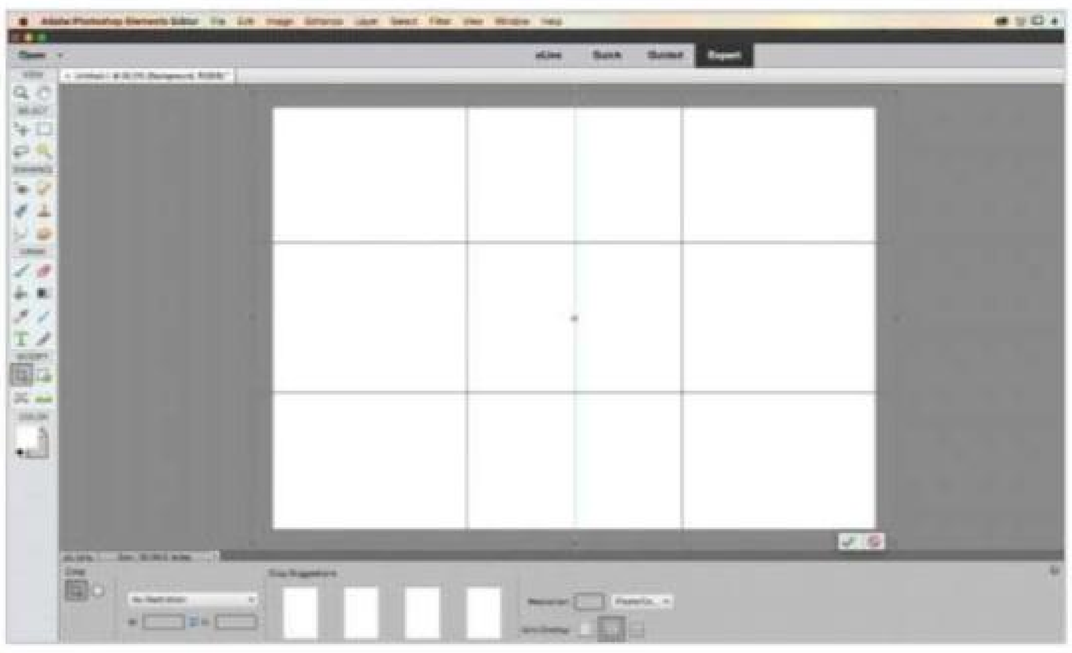
Set up the page

01 We're going to create a 10 x 7 inch invitation, so go to File>New>Blank File and choose inches from the drop-down boxes. You can either choose to make it 5 x 7, or 10 x 7 so you can add a back to the invitation.



Insert a guide

02 If you have chosen to add a back to the invitation, then you are going to need to insert a guide in the centre of the page so that you can judge the space. Choose 12.7cm in order to place it exactly in the centre.



Add your bleed

03 Now add some bleed to the outsides so that when you print your invitation, you're having to cut exactly on the edge. Choose black as your background, grab the Crop tool and make your background bigger.

PRESET
Choose whether you want to create to a template, such as paper or web, or a custom size.

SIZE
If you are creating an image based on a particular template, such as international paper, you should pick a specific size.

RESOLUTION
Choose 300 pixels/inch in order to create a hi-res image that won't be pixelated when you try to print it out onto paper.

COLOUR MODE
Choose RGB when you're creating your image, but convert it to CMYK if you're printing an image with CMYK ink.

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STAGE 2

Build the invitation

Get inspired and start building your invitation

Now that you've created the basic guidelines for your invitation, it's time to start putting together the images, shapes and text.

This is where the fun can really start. There's no limit to how far you can take your project – you might want to personalise an invitation for every guest you're inviting. Whatever you choose to do, it's a nice touch to give your friends something that you've created.

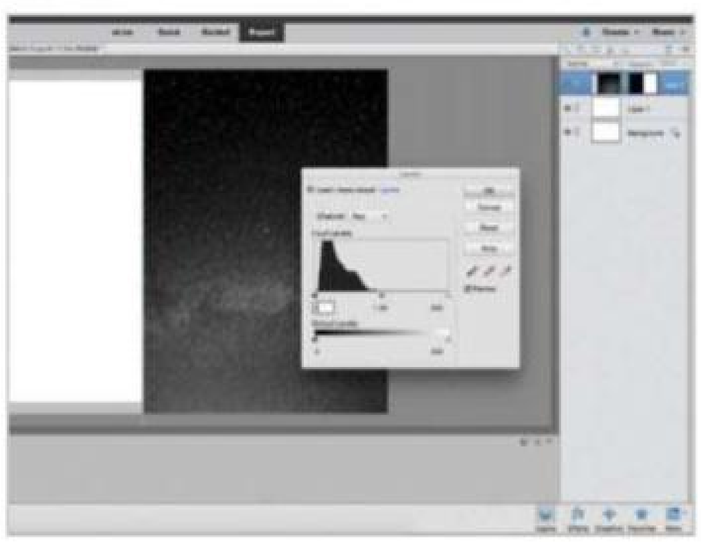
LAYER UP ELEMENTS
Use the Layers panel to add all kinds of effects, shapes and pictures to your invitation until you're happy with the look of it.





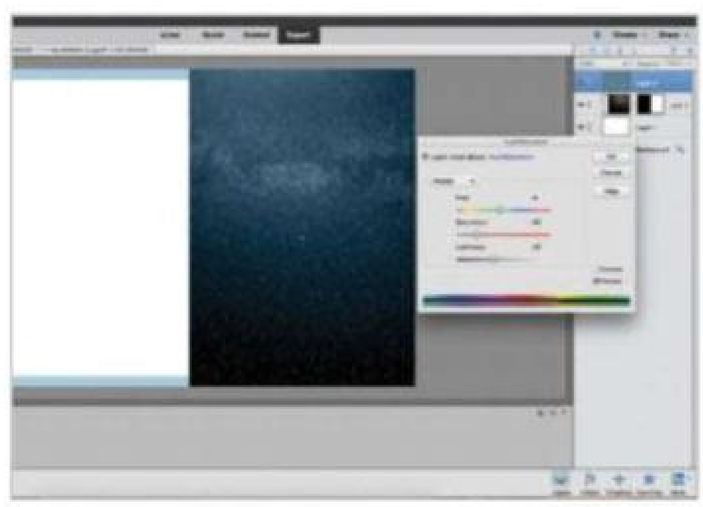
Insert your background

01 Once you have your template in place, add a background to it. For this invitation, we are going to adopt a minimal, but spacey feel; place 'sky.jpg' from the FileSilo on a new layer and place to the right of the blue guideline.



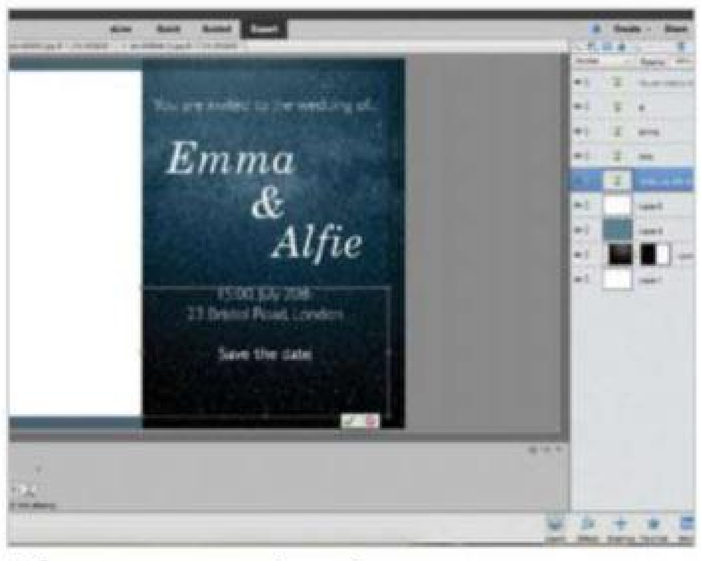
Tweak the levels

02 Desaturate the image, then go to Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) to bring up the Levels tab. Tweak the levels to bring out some of the brightness of the stars and move the middle slider.



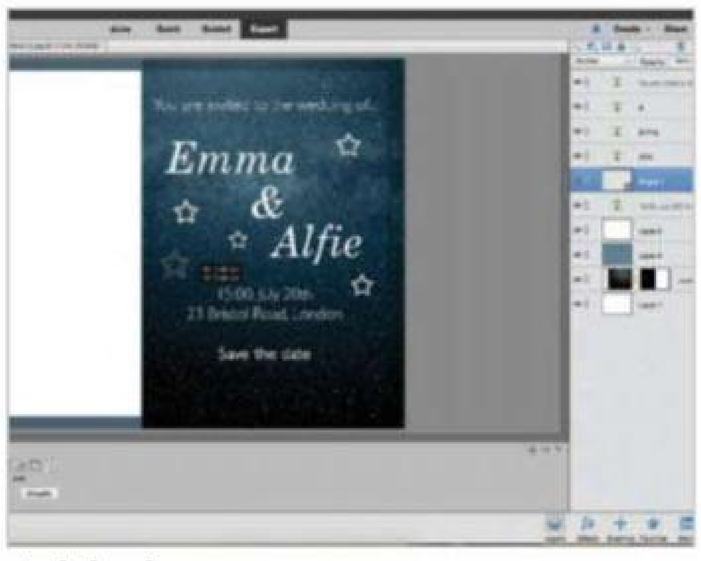
Pick a colour

03 Fill in your canvas blue on a new layer and turn that layer's blend mode to Colour. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+U and tweak the colour. This will give the texture a more subtle tone and you can choose any colour that you like; we went for #5f8192.



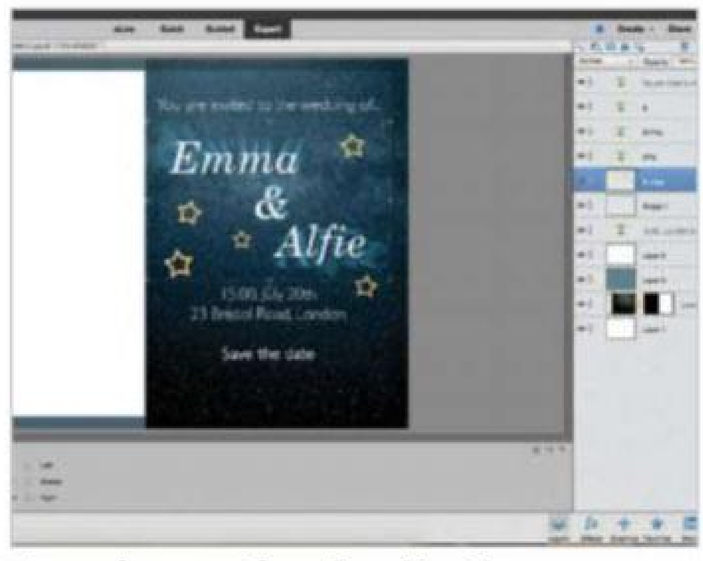
Place your text

04 Grab the Text tool then drag and place a few boxes for you to insert information into. We chose to have individual text boxes for both names on the invitation to spread them out slightly and different fonts for each section.



Add shapes

05 As this is quite a subtle, simple invitation, we're not going to over-embellish it. You can choose to add images if you wish, but we've just gone for a few shapes that you can find under the Shape tool and drag onto the canvas.



Touch up the invitation

06 Brighten up your invitation by colouring the shapes you drop onto it; you might want to add pictures too. Here, we've duplicated the text layers, merged them and applied a Radial Zoom (Filter>Blur>Radial) to give a glow to the text.

STAGE 3

Add finishing touches

Complete your invitation with just a few flourishes

With the bulk of your invitation now done, why not add a few subtle touches to just bring out the best of what you've created?

Adding small details like layer styles and Smart Look filters can really make a good design just look a touch classier. It's the simple touches that really make the difference, so let's finish off this invitation and then print it.



CUSTOMISE YOUR OWN
Use this tutorial for any kind of invitation; you might want to make a more colourful one for a birthday party, for example.

Shortcut
Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U to desaturate a layer



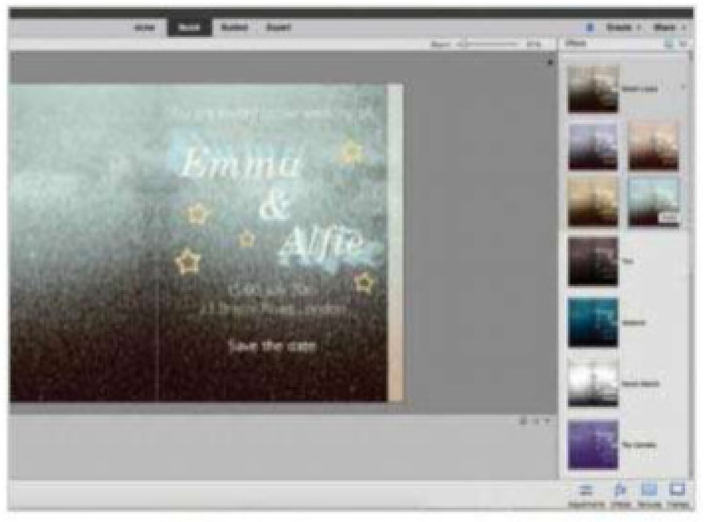
Duplicate the background

01 Now that you have created the front of your invitation, you will need to do the same to the back and duplicate your starry texture. Move it to the left-hand side of the invitation, so that once it has been printed, it will fold like a card.



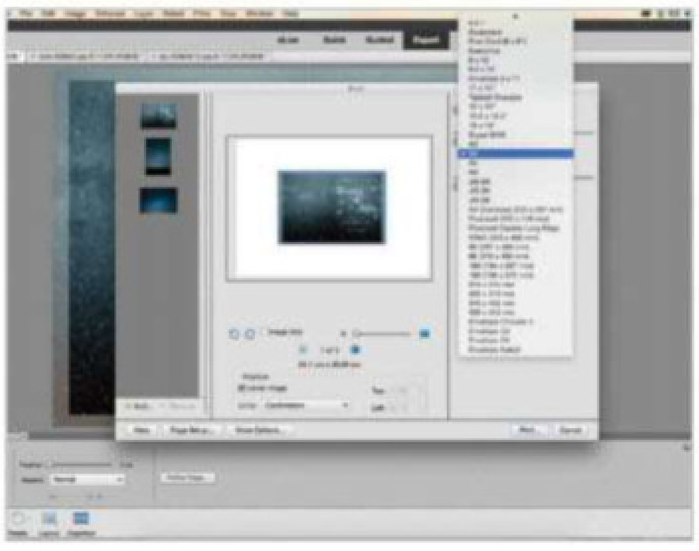
Add layer styles

02 Take a step back to look at your invitation and work out whether the text is legible, as the text is quite an important aspect. Head to Layer>Layer Style> Style Settings, to experiment with layer styles, as this can improve the legibility.



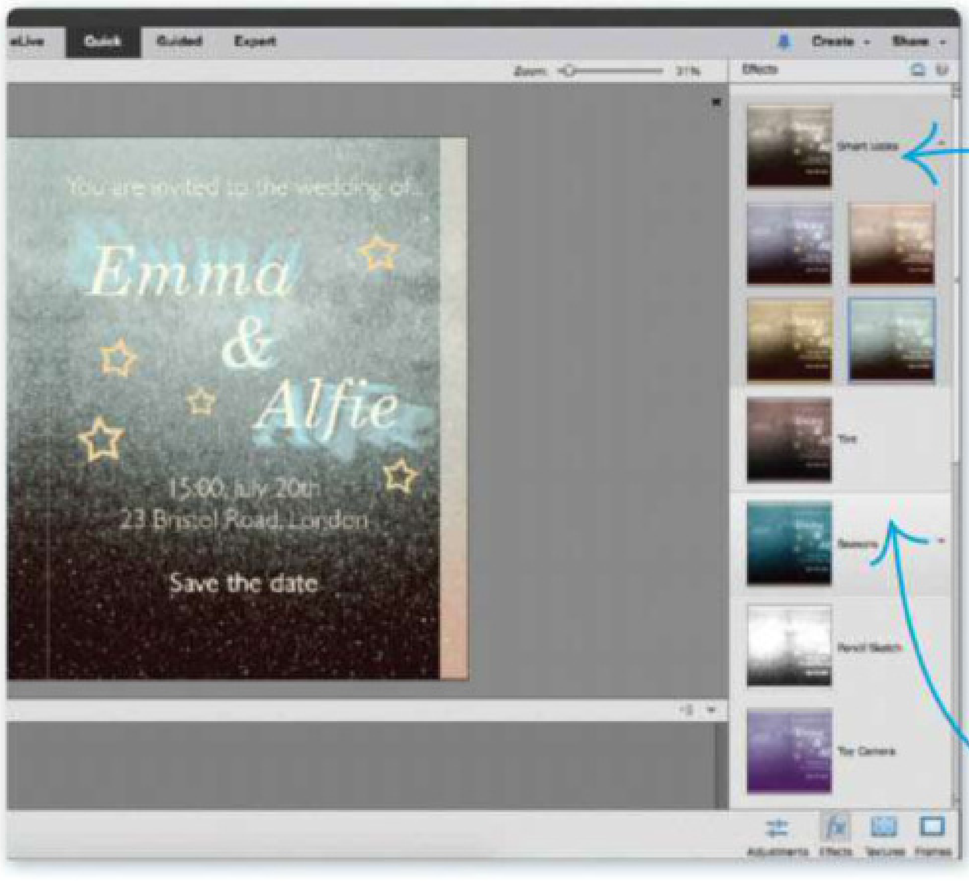
Give it a Smart Look

03 With your invitation complete, you might want to give it one final adjustment to unify the colours. Go to Quick and choose Smart Looks; pick a filter you like, then go back to Expert, where you can lessen the effect with the Opacity slider.



Print your work

04 To finish, you will need to print your work. Head to File>Print to print your work. If you have paper that can print 10 x 7 invitations, use that. Otherwise, print onto A4 and use the bleed you created to get the perfect edge.



RECOMMENDED SMART LOOKS
The Smart Looks are five recommended filters that Elements chooses for you, based on the colouring of your picture.

SEASONS
Choose other filters too from the list, such as Seasons or Pencil Sketch and then tone down the filters in the Expert Mode.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SKY
Planets will look great in any sky, but try to chose your image at either dusk or at dawn, as the colours can look great.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

What does it mean?

SCREEN AND LIGHTEN – The Screen and Lighten blend modes keep the brightest pixels on your layer and remove darker pixels. The Screen layer combines pixels on your layer with the pixels on the layer below and Lighten replaces these pixels. Play with both to see which effect suits your picture best.

Photo edit...

Add planets to skies

Send your photos out of this world with simple intergalactic editing

Whether you're adding a quick adjustment, altering the colour or tweaking the brightness in your landscape shot, there are hundreds of ways to improve a picture subtly. Few though are as creative as bringing a whole galaxy into the atmosphere of your photo, and it's surprisingly simple to master.

The great thing about stock images of planets is that they almost always come with a black background. This makes it really easy to insert into our terrestrial atmosphere, as all you need to do is set the layer's blend mode to Screen. Planets fit into Earth's skies perfectly with a little masking, and they can add colour, excitement and mystery to your pictures.

Of course, you might want to use this technique just to add a moon to your picture, but there's no limit to where you can take it. Experiment with planets and their sizes, and even add colour layers over the top until you're happy with the result. The sky, or quite possibly your imagination, is the limit.



Brighten your horizons Give a touch of science fiction to any photo



Position the planet

01 Grab a start image or use 'coastline.jpg' from the FileSilo. Select an image of a planet from 'solar-system.jpg' and place it onto the sky. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to transform it, so you can resize and reposition it to fit in with the rest of the landscape. You don't want it to be too big.



Set to Screen

02 As most planet images have a black, spacey background, the easiest way to get rid of that background is to hit Screen to remove all black from the picture. This will also give the illusion of clouds in your picture being in front of your planet.



Mask the excess

03 We want to suggest that this planet is shining through the atmosphere, but that it's still light years across the galaxy. Hit the Mask icon and with a 50% Opaque, soft, black brush, mask the edges slightly to improve realism.



Make further edits

04 You can add as many planets to your picture as you wish. Perhaps you're planning a sci-fi scene, or maybe you'd just like to add the moon to a dusky photograph. Finish off with a Photo Filter (Filter>Adjustments>Photo Filter) to complete.

Shortcut
Use Shift and + to scroll through the blend modes to Screen

Add some stars Give a spacey feel to your shot with added nebula



Insert the nebula

Just as you added a planet on a black background to your picture, do the same with a nebula image and set to Screen. This will leave the stars, clusters of clouds and often vibrant colours that give nebulae their distinctive look.



Invert the mask

A great tip for when you're masking is to mask objects in rather than out. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert your mask and you can add the nebula manually wherever you like, rather than masking out where you don't want it.



Brush it in

Begin using a soft, white brush at 20% Opacity. This will give you incredible control when adding the colour to the picture. It's like painting the nebula on, rather than editing around what you want to reveal – it's a useful habit to get into.

Storefinds

What does it mean?

CLONE STAMP – The Clone Stamp tool is used for retouching portraits, as it can replace an area in your picture with pixels from another source. While you will probably just use it mostly for fixing blemishes in your shots, it's a handy tool for getting rid of objects in pictures you don't want, but use it subtly.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Surreal art...

Create a watery candle composition

Master the elements in Elements and turn fire into water

Surreal compositions are some of the most popular Photoshop projects on the internet. They grab your attention with just a simple premise: they're either mind-bending, or you just don't expect to see that combination of objects in the same shot.

Though it's a software package primarily intended for photo editing, it's just as easy to create an exciting composition in Elements. Water is a particularly difficult material to work with, but with the Transform tool, layers and masks, it's easy to bend splashes to fit onto candles. Using blend mode tricks, you can give the illusion of translucency, and adjustments can unify your layers to make the final picture look believable.

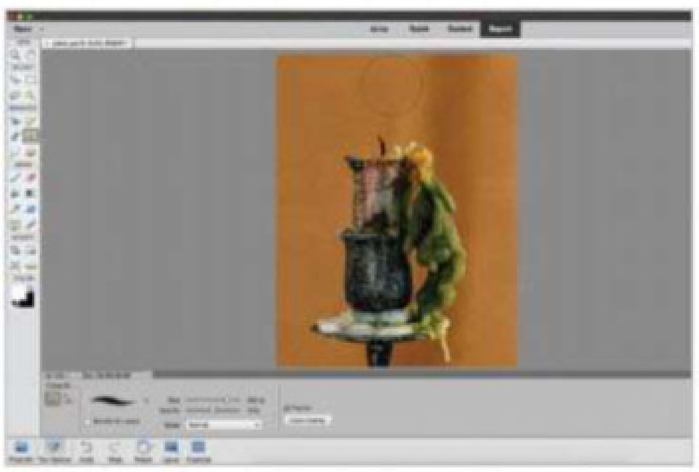
These watery candles look great and by learning the techniques used, you can experiment with all kinds of interesting water compositions. Let's take a closer look at how to photomanipulate, from removing the flame to adding the water. Surreal compositions look complicated, but they needn't be difficult to make.

Set compositions alight Use watery stock photos to turn an ordinary picture on its head



Clone out the flame

01 To replace the fire with an image of water, we must clone out the burning flame. Download 'candle.jpg' from the FileSilo. Grab the Clone Stamp tool and Option/Alt-click to choose a source. Brush over the flame to replace the fire with the background.



Use bigger brushes

02 It will most likely be quite obvious that you've cloned out the flame, so get a bigger brush and clone the areas around the candle. This way, anyone seeing the picture won't guess that the candle was actually lit in the original image.



Repaint the wick

03 If you've mistakenly cloned slightly over the wick of the candle, grab the Dodge tool (O), choose a small size and brush over the wick to give it darkness and colour again. Use an Exposure of 50% and brush over the wick gently.



Sharpen the candle

04 Just before we get into the main photomanipulation, give your candle a touch more sharpness by duplicating your layer, setting to Overlay and then applying a High Pass filter of 4.0px (Filter>Other>High Pass). This keeps the candle looking crisp.



Shortcut
Set layer to Overlay then add High Pass to judge the value

CREATE A STRONG WICK
Remember to keep the black wick in tact, as it will still be needed when you place the splash images over them.

BACKGROUND
When preparing the background before you start, try adding some of the foreground objects too. This is vital for the realism of your final composition.



Insert the splash

05 Now we're going to add the water to the composition. Insert the supplied splash images from the FileSilo. Turn the background to black by inverting the image, then moving the Hue to +180 using the Hue/Saturation menu (Cmd/Ctrl+U).



Place on the candle

06 Set the splash to Screen and duplicate twice. Select all three of these layers now and hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to transform them together. Resize and move them to fit on top of one of the candles. It is important to resize all three layers at once to keep them the same size.



Give it tone

07 With your original layer selected, turn it back to Normal, and then add a layer mask and hit Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. Now using a soft, white brush with 20% Opacity, touch up inside the splash to add a bit more tone to the water image.



Mask the base

08 Add a mask to the two Screen layers and using a soft, black, 50% Opaque brush, mask around the edges of the base of the splash to make it look more like a flame. Remove any excess water and round the edges.



Mask in the wick

09 On the same Screen layers, with the same size and opacity brush, mask in the wick of your candle gently to bring it back into the composition slightly, suggesting that, like a flame, the splash is coming from there.



FIRST LAYER
The first layer of your splash should be set to Normal and masked only for the tone and shade of the water.

WATER SHAPE
Luckily, splashes have the perfect shape to double up as flames, so there's no need to skew or distort them.

SECOND AND THIRD LAYERS
The other two Screen layers of your candle produce the watery texture with the lighter shades.

MASK LIGHTLY
Make sure you're careful when masking your splash, as feathered edges look rather obvious in compositions.



Make some more splashes

10 Using the same screen and mask techniques add some more splashes, masking in the water droplets to build on your existing splash. This is a particularly good exercise as it helps you to practise these useful compositing techniques.



Create condensation

11 Use the supplied water splashes and the same compositing and masking techniques to place a few water droplets on the edge of one of the candles to give the impression of condensation. Transform to fit the candle.

Expert tip

Remember to use the Eye icon

When you're creating compositions, it's easy to lose track of the exact look you're trying to create in your final image. Sometimes you need to take a break and come back to your project in order to see something you didn't before, but using the Eye icons can help to give you a completely new perspective.

Use the Eye icons to toggle visibility of that layer. You can quickly flick between before and after; scroll down them to hide multiple layers or Option/Alt+click an icon to show just that layer.



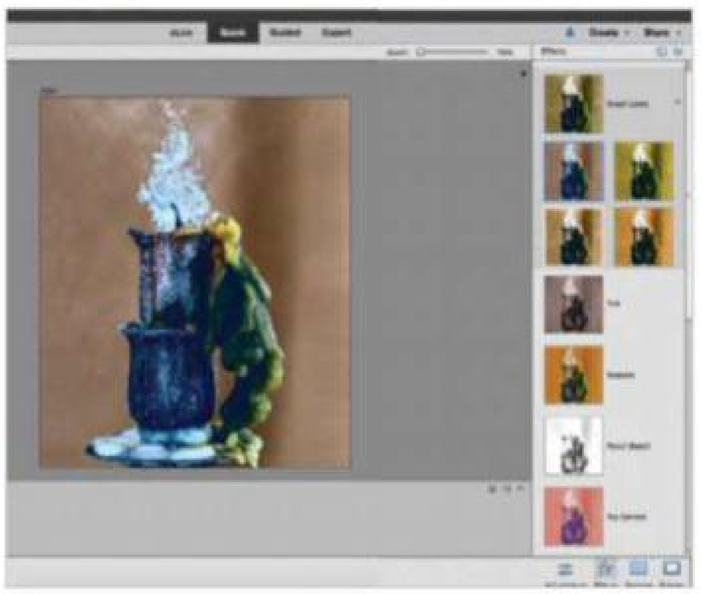
Colour the water

12 On a new layer on the top of the stack, grab a 20% Opaque brush and with shades of blue, gently brush over your splashes to add a touch of colour to the watery flame. Set this layer to Color and adjust the opacity as needed.



Insert the steam

13 We still want to imply that these candles are hot, so create a new layer and fill with black. Go to Filter>Render>Clouds and click OK. Hit Mask, Invert (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and with a 20% Opaque, white soft brush, mask in a little steam into the image.



Add a smart look

14 Now with our image pretty much complete, go to the Quick tab across the top bar of Elements and then use a Quick Look filter to bring the best out of the colours and tones of the whole image. Then double-click to set.

Shortcut
Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate a chosen layer quickly

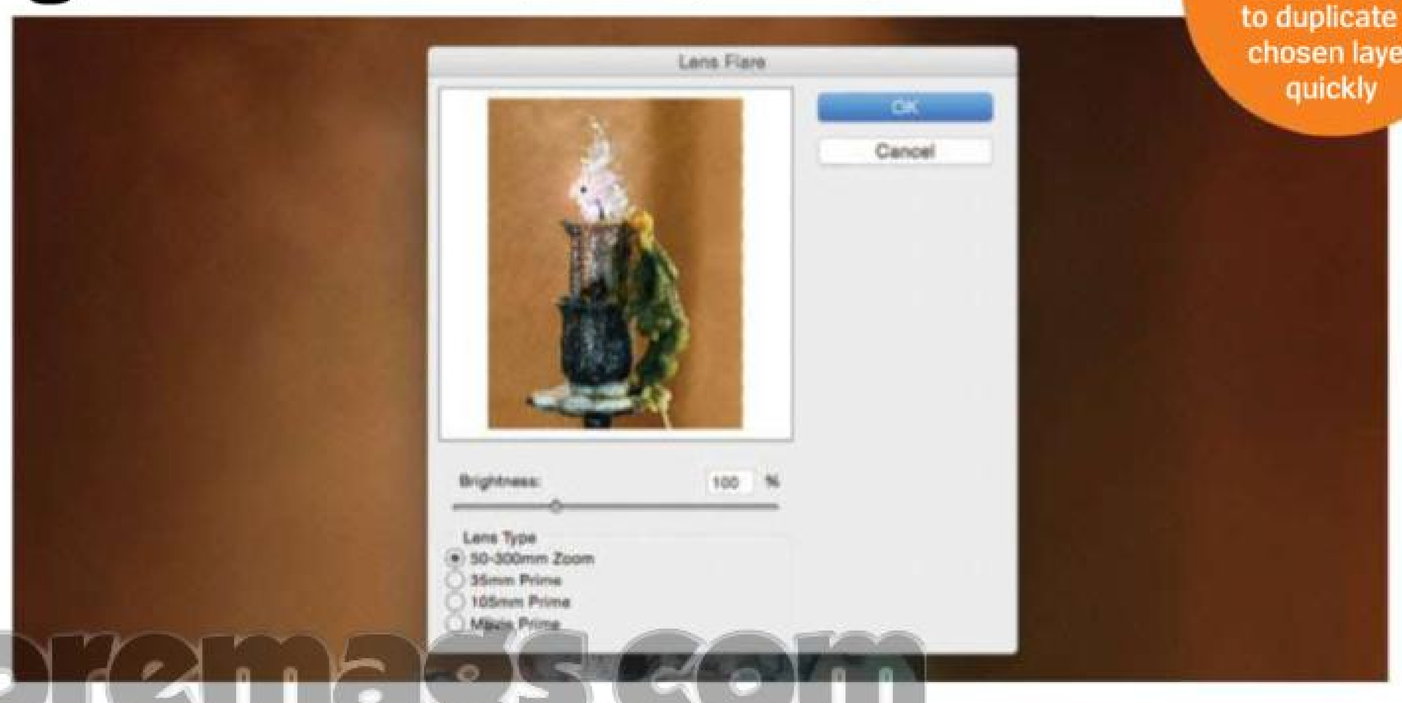
Make use of lighting effects

Add a sparkle to your composition

With all kinds of compositions, lighting effects are important. They don't just help to brighten up your image, they help frame it too, and a well-placed lighting effect can transform the look and feel of your project.

There are all kinds of lighting effects you can create too, and they can be especially fun to play around with in a picture in which fire – a bright material in pictures – has been replaced with water.

Create a snapshot of your picture by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E and go to Filter>Render>Lens Flare to add a glisten to your water. If you want to add more colour, add a new layer, set to Color and brush in some light yellow.



Storemags.com

What does it mean?

FILTER GALLERY – The Filter Gallery can create all kinds of weird and wacky novelty effects to transform your images, but these effects can be useful for all kinds of projects. The Cutout effect, for example, is useful for creating low-poly artwork, and Plastic Wrap can be used for watery compositions.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Digital art...

Blend illustration with reality

Create a vibrant half-real, half-cartoon composition in Elements

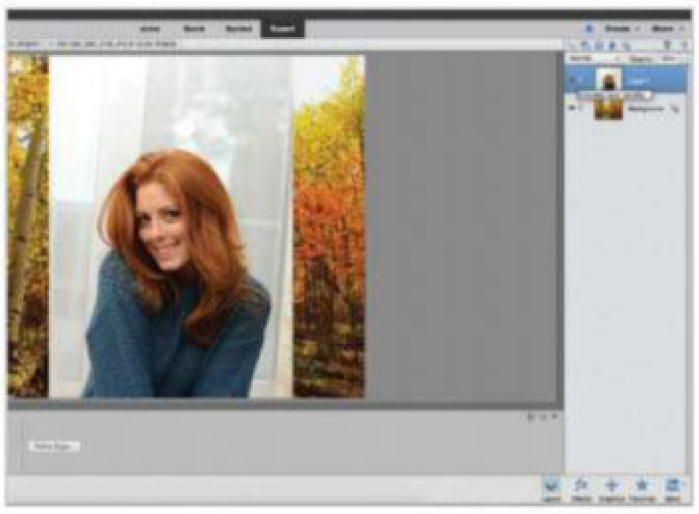
Creating an illustration in Elements looks like a particularly complicated project to tackle. You might worry that you're not artistically talented enough, or that you only have a mouse instead of a graphics tablet with a pen, so won't be able to accurately draw. However, it is still possible to create amazing cartoonised portraits with absolute ease in Elements without a tablet and top drawing skills – and it can be even more rewarding to highlight just how dazzling the subject is by mixing them with reality.

You don't have to be a gifted digital painter who can draw people freehand with a mouse, because Elements can convert any picture into a line drawing for you. If you isolate the subject in your image, you can create an outline of them and the rest is simply down to your own creativity. Brushes can really flesh out the cartoon; either use the Calligraphic brushes that come as default with Elements, or load your own for a more personalised touch.

The great thing about this tutorial is that anyone can master it, regardless of how skilled you are with a pencil. Filters make so many things easy in Elements, so make the most of them and get as creative as you can with your illustration. You might want to use other filters to fill in your line drawing rather than brush strokes. Follow our steps and create your very own vibrant illustration blended with reality, and experiment with colour combinations and blend modes.

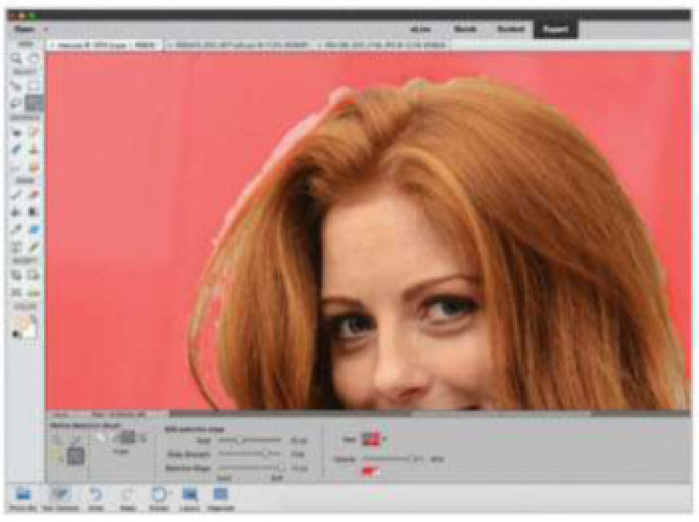
storemags.com

Mix the styles Comp your image, create the cartoon and blend it with your original photo



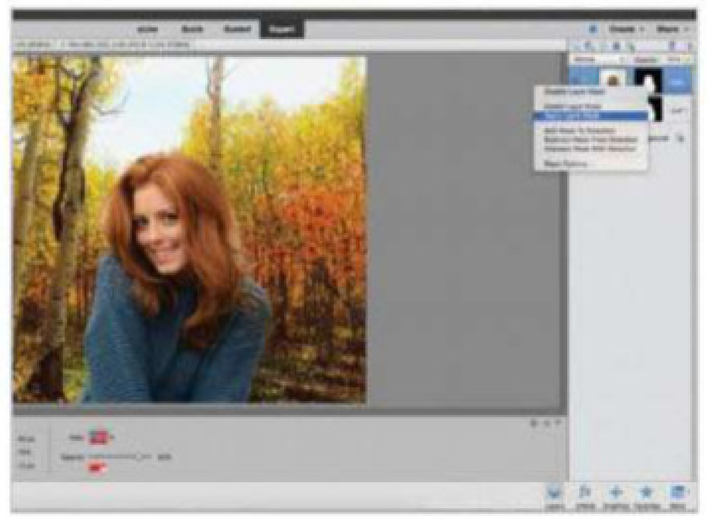
Choose your photos

01 Start off by choosing a photo of a subject, then a background that you want to place them onto. Make sure you pick two photos of similar angles and two pictures that look as if they belong together. Feel free to download ours from the FileSilo.



Mask the subject

02 Select your subject with the Quick Selection tool and, using the Refine Selection brush, stroke the edges of your subject to touch up your selection. Be sure to pay close attention to the hair and hit Mask when you're happy.



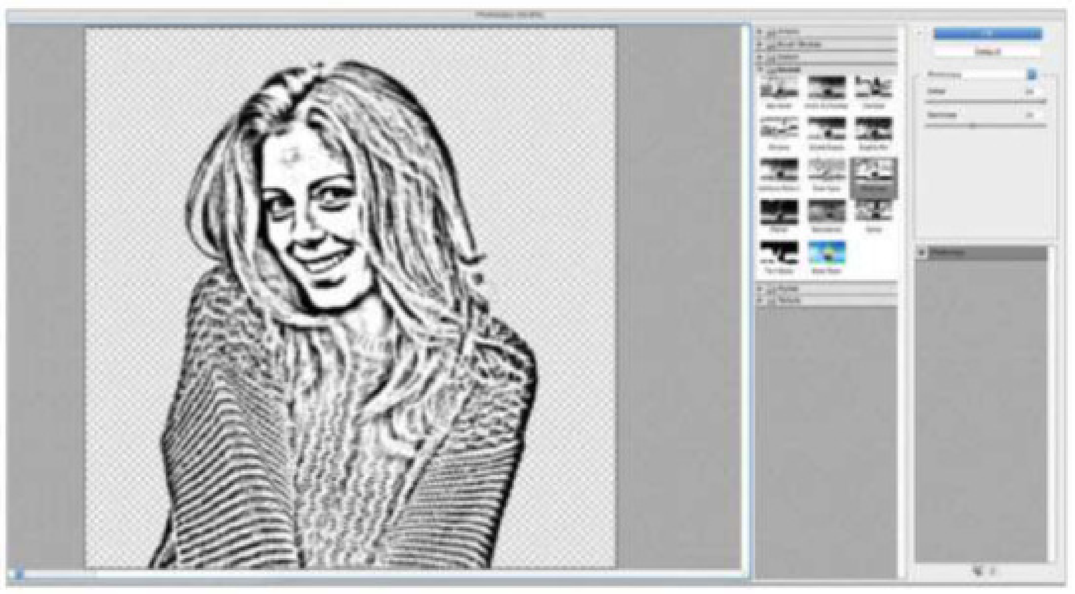
Apply the layer mask

03 Next, we're going to apply the layer mask by Ctrl/right-clicking and choosing Apply Layer Mask. Before that, duplicate your original layer and hide it, in case you need to use it again or go back a few steps. This is great for non-destructive editing.



Blend with the background

04 Apply a gradient of Yellow/Orange/Brown (#ffff00/#ff6e02/#6a2d17) to your picture and set as a Clipping Mask (Ctrl/right-click>Create Clipping Mask) so that it only affects your subject. Set to Soft Light, 20% Opacity, then Merge Down. This blends your subject and background, so that you'll use more realistic colours later.



Add the filter

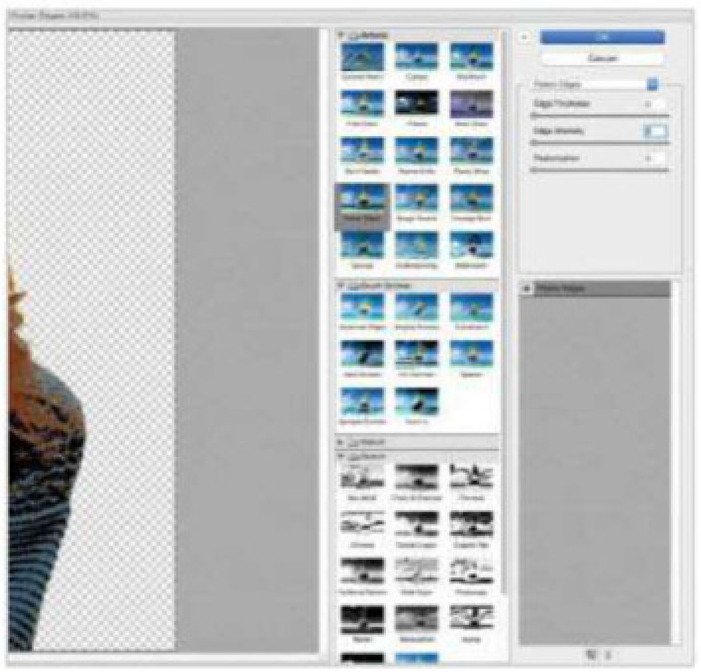
05 Duplicate your subject layer. Go to Filter>Filter>Gallery>Photocopy and choose Detail: 24, Darkness: 10. This will convert your subject into a line drawing ready for you to paint between the lines. Hit OK and choose Multiply to keep the black strokes and hide the white in the picture.



Shortcut
Option/Alt-click on a layer to quickly create a clipping mask

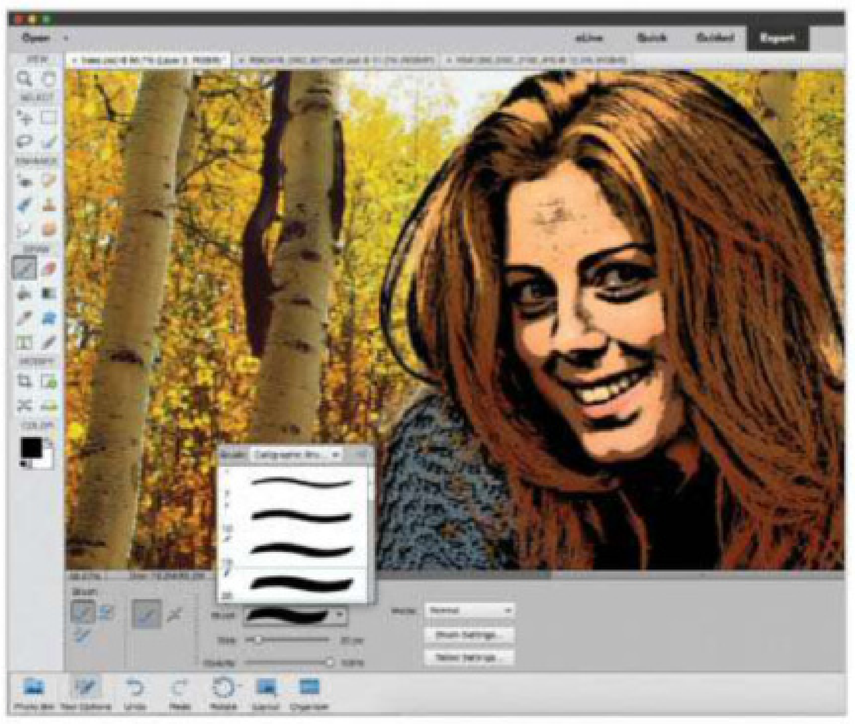
GRAPHIC PEN
Instead of using the Photocopy filter, you might want to go for an even more sketchier effect and then choose the Graphic Pen filter.

OTHER OPTIONS
Stamp and Charcoal also create black and white drawings from your picture; simply experiment with what works best and looks good for your specific image.



Add a second filter

06 Duplicate your subject layer again. This is going to be the layer on which you base all of your colouring, so go to Filter> Filter Gallery again and this time choose Poster Edges with Thickness, Intensity and Posterization set to 0 for each. Hit OK.



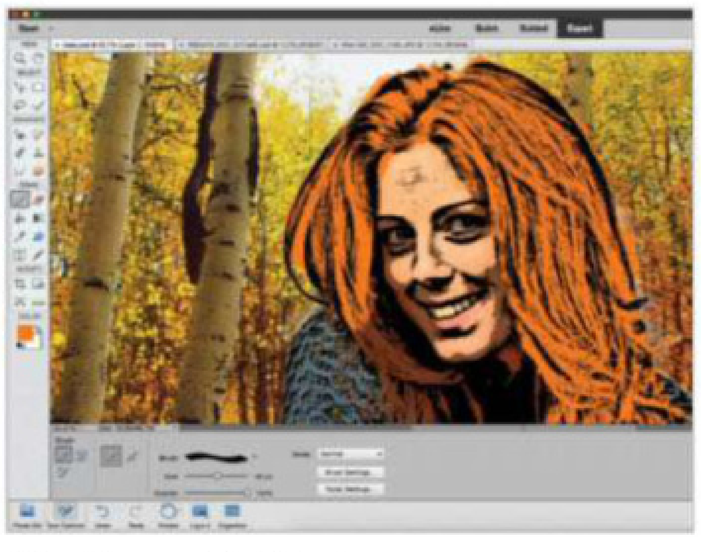
Choose a brush

07 Now as you can see, we have a cartoonised version of the subject. We're going to take that further though with block colours; grab the Brush tool, go to Calligraphic brushes in the drop-down menu and choose a thick brush to start painting with.

Expert tip

Use a graphics tablet for ease

Graphics tablets can really enhance the way you use Photoshop and Elements, as they make it easier to control brushes. At first, it may take a while to get used to drawing on a tablet, as it is different to traditional pen and paper, but with practice you'll soon discover how easy it is! Using a stylus to physically draw can not only give you pressure sensitivity, but it can also give precision to your brush strokes; if you're someone who enjoys creating digital art, consider investing in one in order to make your working process easier.



Begin painting

08 Create a new layer. Option/Alt-click to pick a colour within your subject's hair – make it a rich, bright shade – and start sketching. Don't worry too much about going over the lines, as this just adds to the messy effect of illustration.



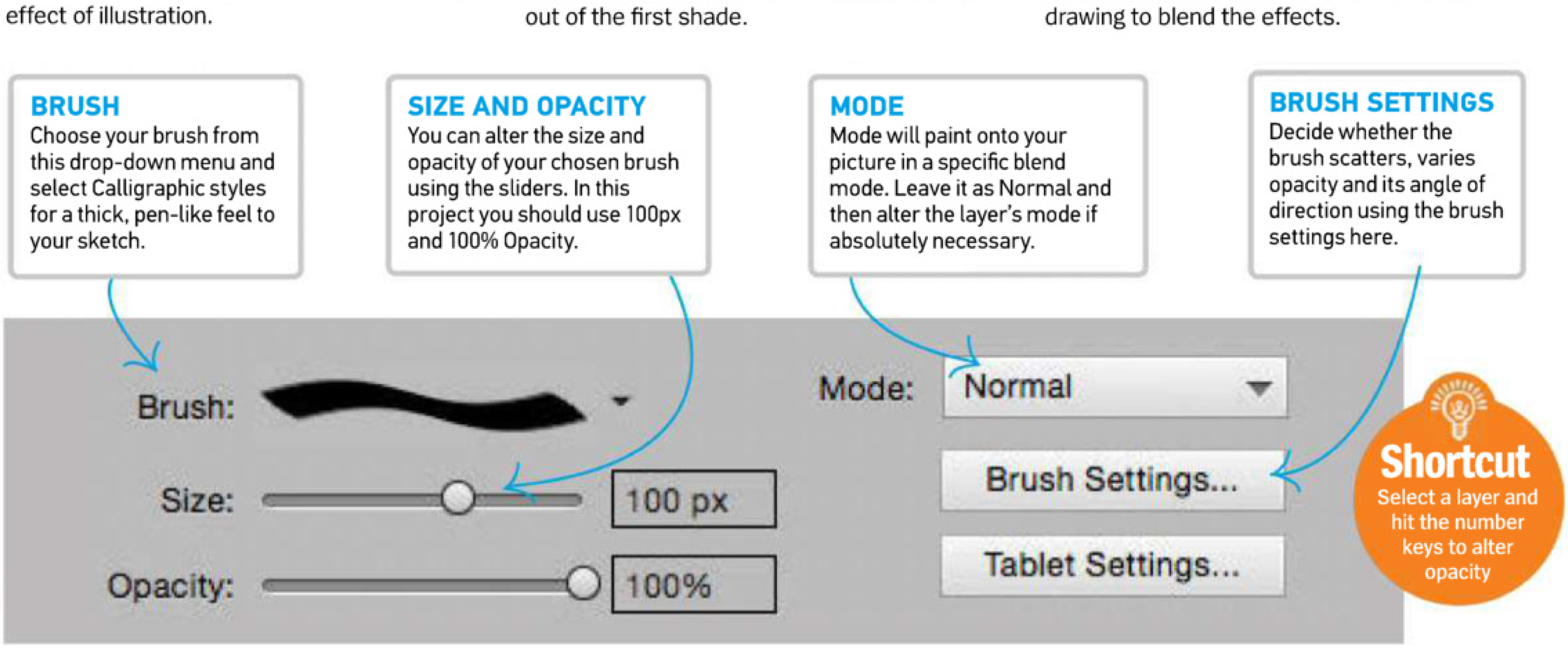
Apply a second coat

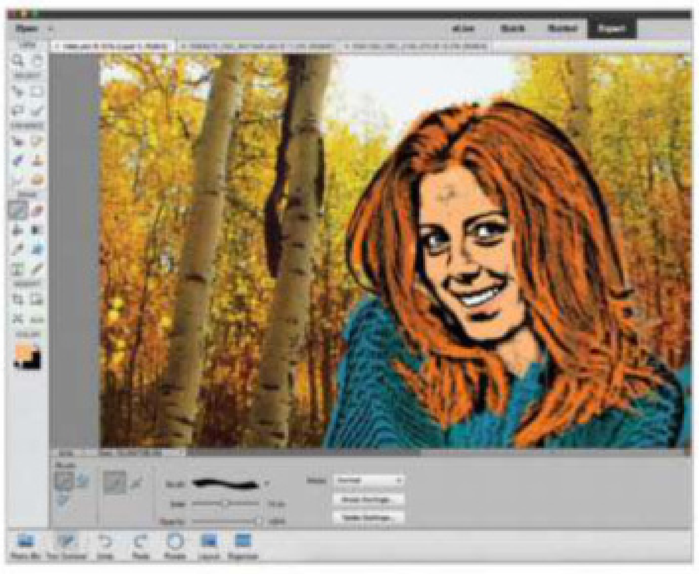
09 Do the same thing again on a new layer with the hair, hiding the first layer briefly to pick a second colour. Then make gentle brush strokes for simple highlights or low lights, which will help to bring the colour out of the first shade.



Build up your strokes

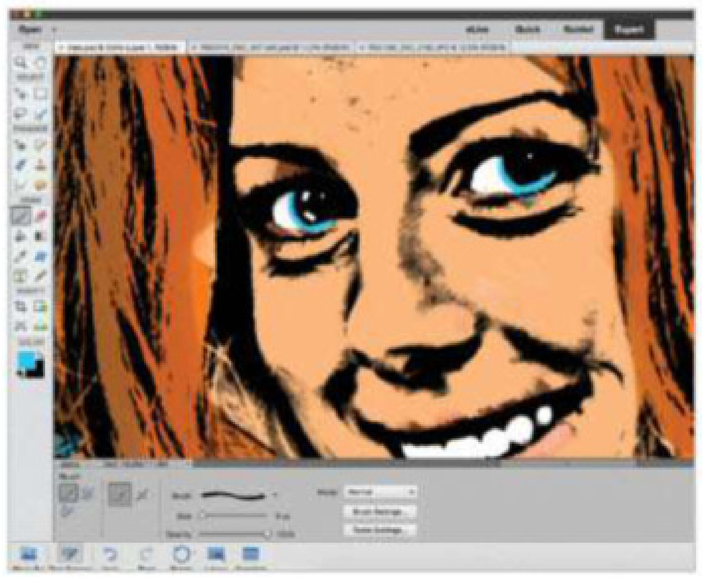
10 Paint in your subject's eyes, teeth and clothes, making bigger strokes on new layers and mixing up colours. We've chosen to make more messy strokes on the right of the model so that we can hide some of the line drawing to blend the effects.





Colour the skin

11 Now you need to start colouring the skin by Option/Alt-clicking to pick a colour again, and then on a layer between the hair layers, brush in the shade. Don't be afraid to overlap the hair, but try to keep the colour of the lips pink.



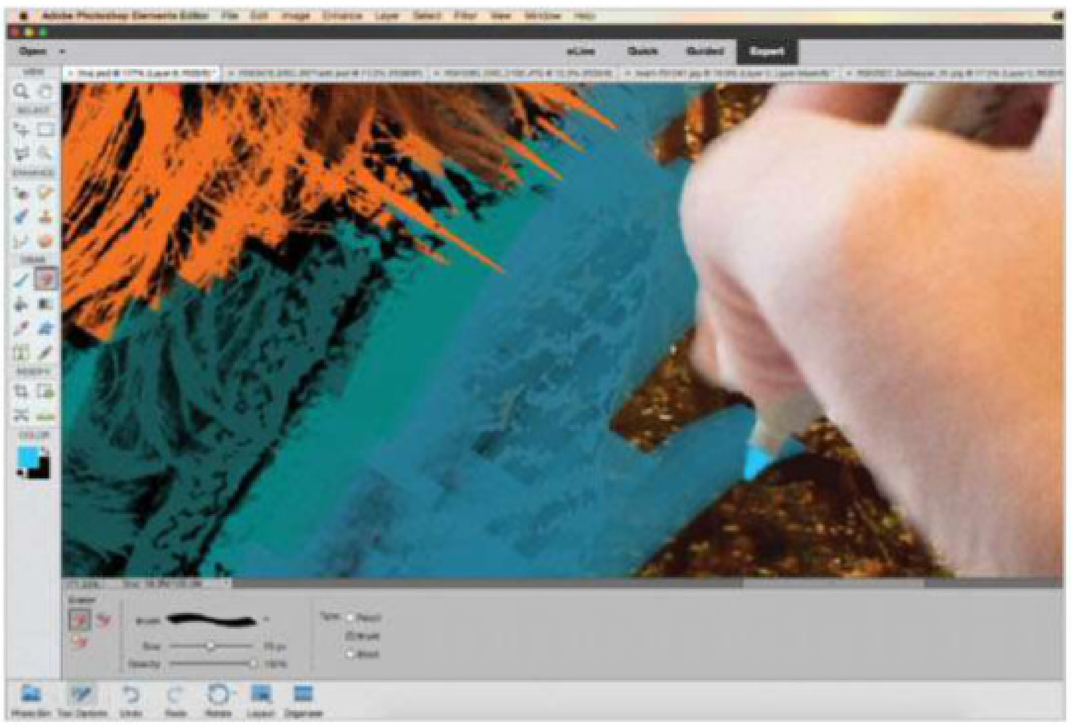
Add the irises

12 The key to paintings, illustrations and sketches is often in the eyes. If the eyes look real, the picture will look more realistic; as we're trying to tone down the realism in favour of a cartoon style, draw a cartoony iris around the pupils of your subject.



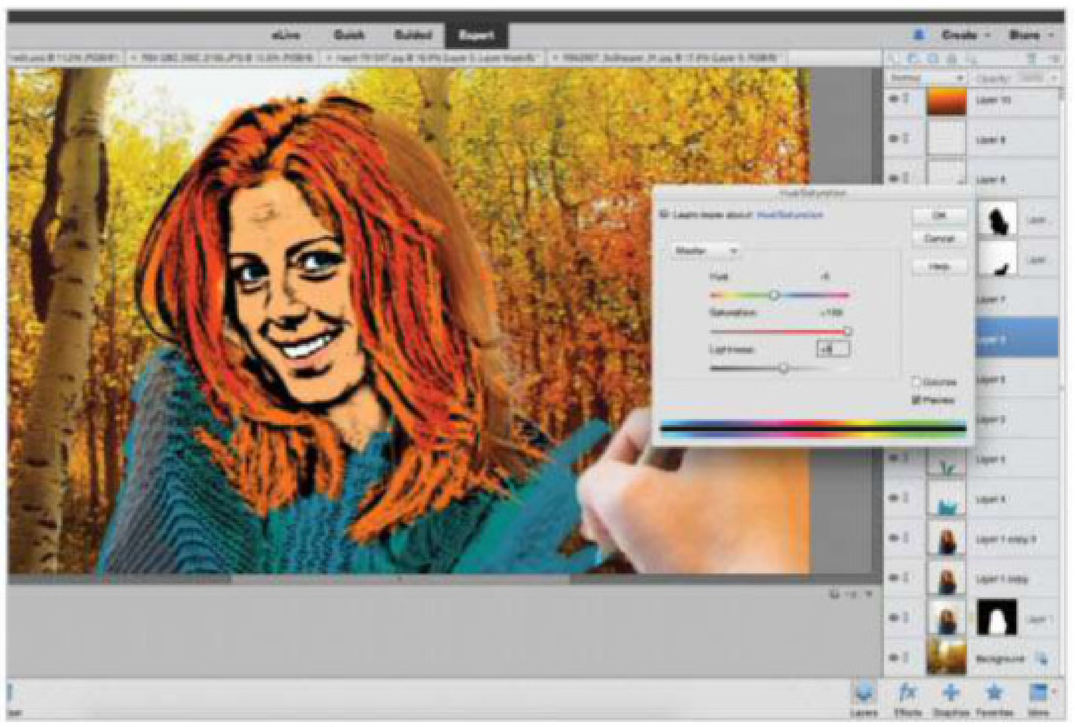
Mask with reality

13 It's time to blur it with the original photo to highlight the difference between the two. Duplicate your original picture, move to the top of the layer stack and mask out most of the picture. Mask the corner of the line drawing too.



Add the hand

14 Next, you need to cut out the pen-holding hand from its stock photo, provided on the FileSilo, then paste it into the picture. It's a nice touch here to grab a brush and recolour the nib of the pen to match what it's actually drawing on to.



Tweak the colours

15 To finish, use the Hue/Saturation command to tweak the colour of individual layers and add another Yellow/Orange/Brown gradient, as in step 4, set to Soft Light, 20% Opacity to finalise the picture and unify the colours.

Experiment with gradients

Inject even more vibrant colour

Creating a picture that's half-illustration, half-reality is an opportunity to be as vivid and creative as possible in order to contrast against the normality and simple tones of your photo. While it's easy to get bold and bright when choosing colours to sketch with, you can take colouring a step further when it comes to clipping masks. Create a new layer over the sketched layer that you wish to brighten up, create a clipping mask by Option/Alt-clicking the layer and grab the Gradient tool (G). Select colours and drag them across your picture, before experimenting with blend modes. Soft Light is a good option.



Q+A COMMON PROBLEMS IN ELEMENTS

Get in touch Ask on Twitter @PshopCreative | Post on facebook PhotoshopCreative | Alternatively, you can email: pcr@imagine-publishing.co.uk

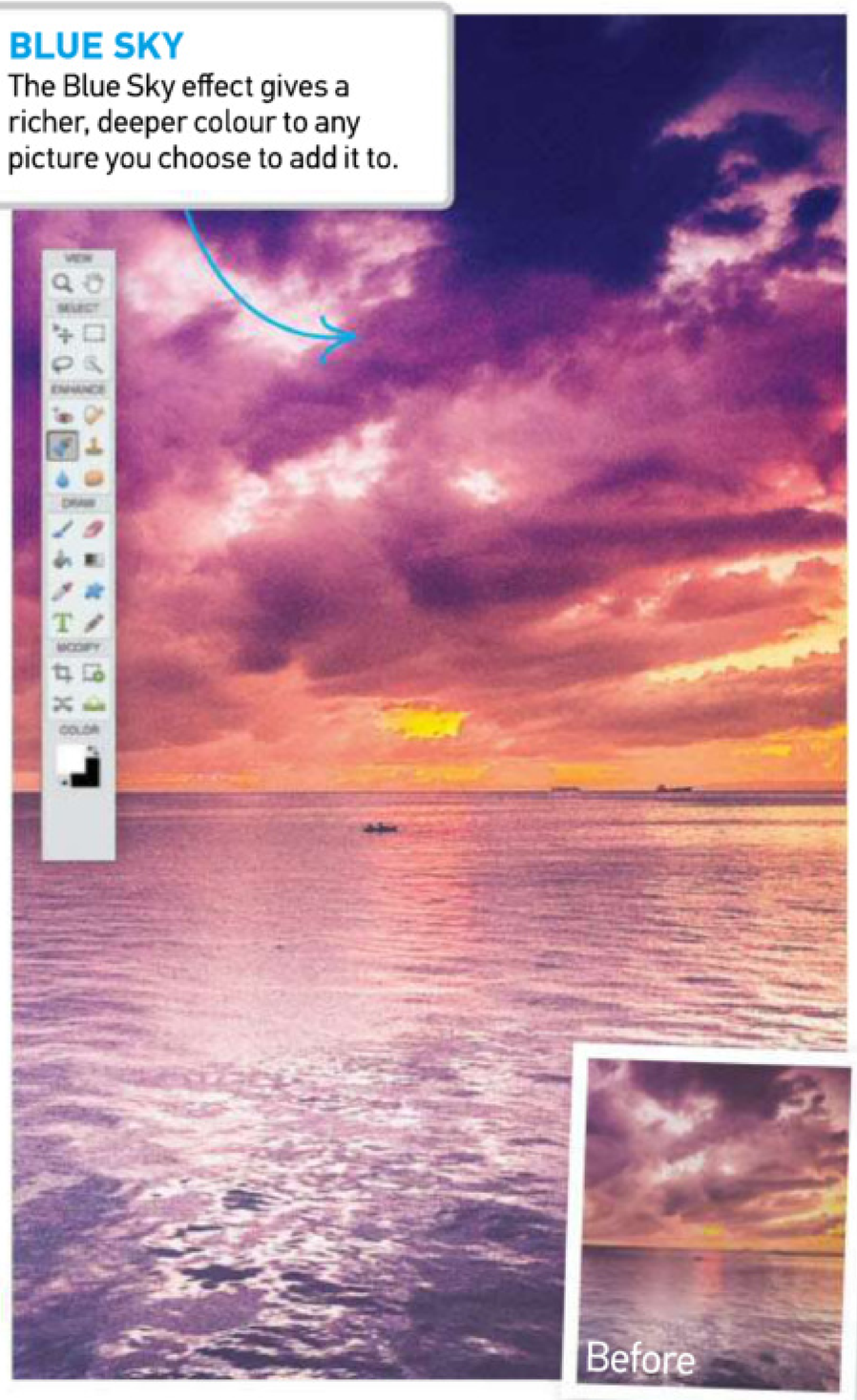
WHAT DOES THE SMART BRUSH DO AND HOW CAN I USE IT IN MY PICTURES?

The Smart Brush is located in the Enhance section of the toolbar on the left-hand side of Elements. It's used to brush quick effects onto your pictures, such as blue skies or enhanced brightness, and it works similarly to the Quick Selection in that you select the area of the image that you would like to brush.

On from there, Elements creates a mask and the effect is applied to that mask. These are simple photo-editing effects that you can apply through other means; for example the Blue Skies effect is just a layer of blue set to Colour Burn. This means that you can tone down the opacity or alter the blend mode of the Smart Brush layer, so everything is editable and non-destructive.

You can use the Smart Brush as a quick final adjustment to make to a picture, or you can edit an entire project just using Smart Brush effects.

BLUE SKY
The Blue Sky effect gives a richer, deeper colour to any picture you choose to add it to.



NATURE IMAGES
You can use any kind of picture to expose with your portrait, but try images with lush textures or interesting colours.

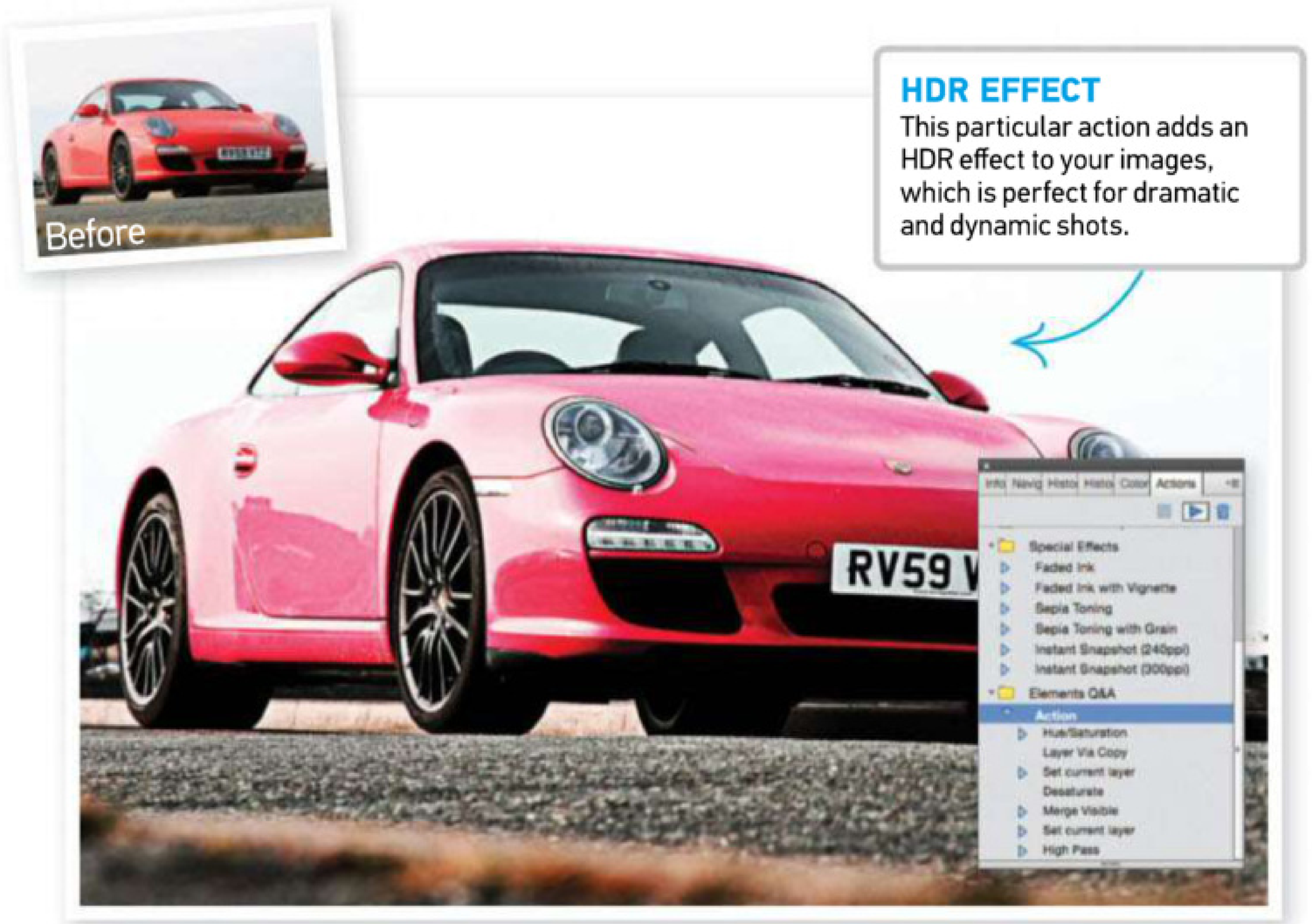


HOW CAN I CREATE A SIMPLE BUT COLOURFUL AND EYE-CATCHING DOUBLE-EXPOSURE PORTRAIT?

Double exposures are some of the most popular portrait styles out there, and the great thing about them is that they are easy to create and wildly creative.

Here, the original image of the subject has been given more contrast with the Levels tool (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and then nature images have been placed over the top. Set your nature images to Screen and the darker pixels of the portrait will be replaced by the lush tones of greenery from your nature images. Experiment with the positioning of the nature images. You can use multiple nature images at different places in the picture; just mask where they overlap. Mask in the image with the lake across the bottom of the portrait, copy the original portrait to the top of the layer stack and mask in the features for more clarity.

Finish your picture with a light-coloured texture, such as smoke, set to Multiply and again, mask out where appropriate. Recolour the eyes with a brush, on a new layer set to Colour, if need be. You can download all of these nature images, plus the original portrait from the supplied resources on the FileSilo.



IS IT POSSIBLE TO CREATE AND USE ACTIONS IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS?

Actions are like shortcuts to getting the perfect finish on your picture. They can be applied to any picture and will transform it through a series of steps, usually adjustments; they are a favourite with Photoshop users and can help speed up your workflow, as well as maintain consistent editing across multiple pictures.

Although there isn't a way to actually create actions in Photoshop Elements, it's entirely possible to still use them to edit your photos. Simply go to Window>Actions and you'll see the Actions tab is already loaded with some basic edits that you can apply to your picture. Use the Play icon to actually add the effects to your image and Elements will cycle through the editing steps for you automatically.

You can download all kinds of actions from numerous places, including the FileSilo.

CAN I USE PHOTOSHOP ADJUSTMENT CURVES IN ELEMENTS?

The Curves adjustment is one of the most popular in Photoshop CS and CC, but unfortunately it isn't available in the same form in Photoshop Elements. It's used to alter the tone of your picture by dragging the channels on a histogram, which makes it easy to create colour effects, as well as alter the light, dark, blacks and whites in your photo.

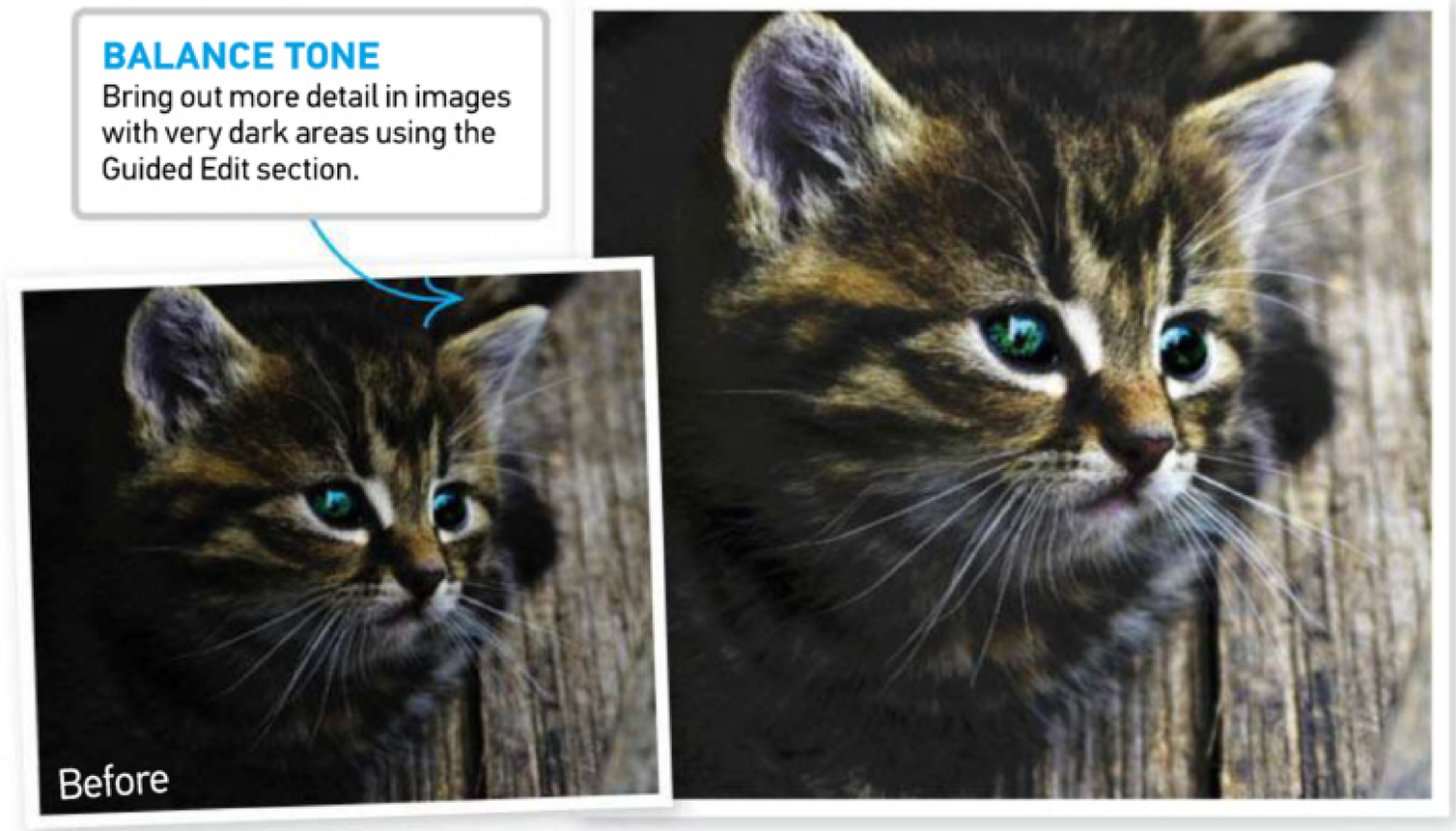
In Elements however, you can use the Levels tool for exactly the same edits. Open the Levels dialog by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+L and you will notice that the tool consists of stoppers along a horizontal slider. Tweak these to change brightness and exposure of your picture. Consult the drop-down menu and you will see that you can also alter the individual colour channels of your image. Now, tweak the middle stoppers for the Red, Green and Blue channels individually and you can create retro photo effects with your pictures.



Quick tip

Quickly view files

When you're working in Elements, it's likely that you will have multiple files open across the top of your window, especially if you're creating a composition that requires various different stock images. Instead of clicking on the file names at the top, quickly view the thumbnail of the image by clicking the Photo Bin in the bottom left. If your pictures have similar file names, this is a more organised way of viewing pictures, speeding up workflow.



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CONTROL BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST IN IMAGES?

Brightness and contrast can make a picture so it's important to get a good balance of tone in your shots. You can edit both in Expert mode, but it's just as easy to use Guided Edit.

Open your image, head to the Guided Edit section, and you'll see that there is the option to improve the brightness and contrast of your image using an edit from here. This does the same thing as in Expert mode, only there's a bigger preview space. Once you've made the edit that you'd like to, click on the Expert mode to edit further.



www.loish.net
@loishh

Artistic digital mastery

Lois van Baarle is a digital artist living in Europe who has a keen eye for creating characters with vibrant colour combinations

Having collaborated on projects for Coca-Cola and being featured on the packaging for Wacom's new Intuos products, Lois van Baarle has created a wonderful career as a freelance artist. Her artwork is 100 per cent digital and she utilises Photoshop from start to finish, normally sticking to one brush per project.

Your artwork reflects Japanese art, Art Nouveau and possibly a little Disney. What were some of your main influences as you developed your style?

I'd say the three main influences are already listed in the question! I usually describe my own work as a mixture of Art Nouveau, Disney and manga. My primary inspiration is the artwork of Alphonse Mucha. I was also heavily inspired by Aurore Demilly and other French comic artists.

What are your favourite Photoshop tools?

I'm a huge fan of the colour-editing tools in Photoshop, because I like the colour combinations in my art to be powerful and emotive, and these tools are essential in helping me create interesting colour schemes. Right now my favourite is Selective color, which I usually use to intensify the reds and pinks in my artwork, and tone down the whites. I developed my skills at using these tools in small steps, starting with what I knew – the Brush and Smudge tools – and gradually trying out more and more things. The most important tools are your Brush tool and the tablet, so it's really essential to get the hang of that before trying anything more complex.

What was it like creating artwork for Wacom's new line of tablets?

I was very happy to work with one of my all-time favourite brands! Wacom wanted to use artwork that had already been created, so it was a very simple commitment on my end. All I had to do was make some minor adjustments and upload some files!

What made you showcase your work online on DeviantArt?

I basically joined it purely because other artists had their work there and I was curious whether my work would gain any exposure on this new site. It ended up being one of the most important websites for me! My fan base really grew on DeviantArt and it also got me in touch with a lot of other artists who later became friends. I discovered a lot of new inspiring artwork there as well. I think being part of an online artistic community is really important for artists like myself, who spend a lot of time on the computer.

You created a Kickstarter project to help find funding for an artbook; how did you go about this?

I had plans to create an artbook for a while, mainly because people had been asking whether there was one for many years. I didn't actually manage to get the ball rolling until I got in touch with 3DTotal (**www.3dtotal.co.uk**), who wanted to do a Kickstarter funded artbook campaign. I had done some basic research into what it takes to make an artbook and knew that it was a fairly daunting task. I think an important step to creating a successful Kickstarter campaign is generating exposure. People need to know about your project and spread the word. In our case that was fairly easy, since both 3DTotal and I had a strong fan base.

More recently you worked with Psyop on Coca-Cola's *Man and Dog*. What was this like?

It was a fantastic experience! Psyop were fantastic to work with. They were very professional and provided concise, to-the-point feedback that really pushed the character designs forward. The final result – the animated spot, which I only provided some character designs for, but didn't work on for the rest – was fantastic!

How important is it to share your process with your fans?

Although I want my digital paintings to stand on their own, I think it's important for them to fit into a greater body of work. One of my strengths as an artist is that it's possible to see how my art has developed and grown over the years, making each piece a step in a longer process. I like to include steps of my illustrations and snippets of my process to emphasise this fact. I believe my work is stronger when seen as part of a process.



Coca-Cola – Man and Dog: "I created these character designs for a Coca-Cola animated spot, directed by the fantastic animation studio Psyop. I started with some rough sketches and with Psyop's feedback, we narrowed down the designs until we had a more definitive look.
© Images created for Psyop's Coca-Cola *Man and Dog* animated spot, directed by Todd Mueller & Kylie Matulick, and animated by Duncan Studio.



Silence : "After watching a few Hollywood films that portray space as a cold, unforgiving and terrifying place, I wanted to make an illustration portraying space as calm, dream-like and relaxing. This image was selected for the packaging of Wacom's Intuos Art box, which was really awesome to see!"

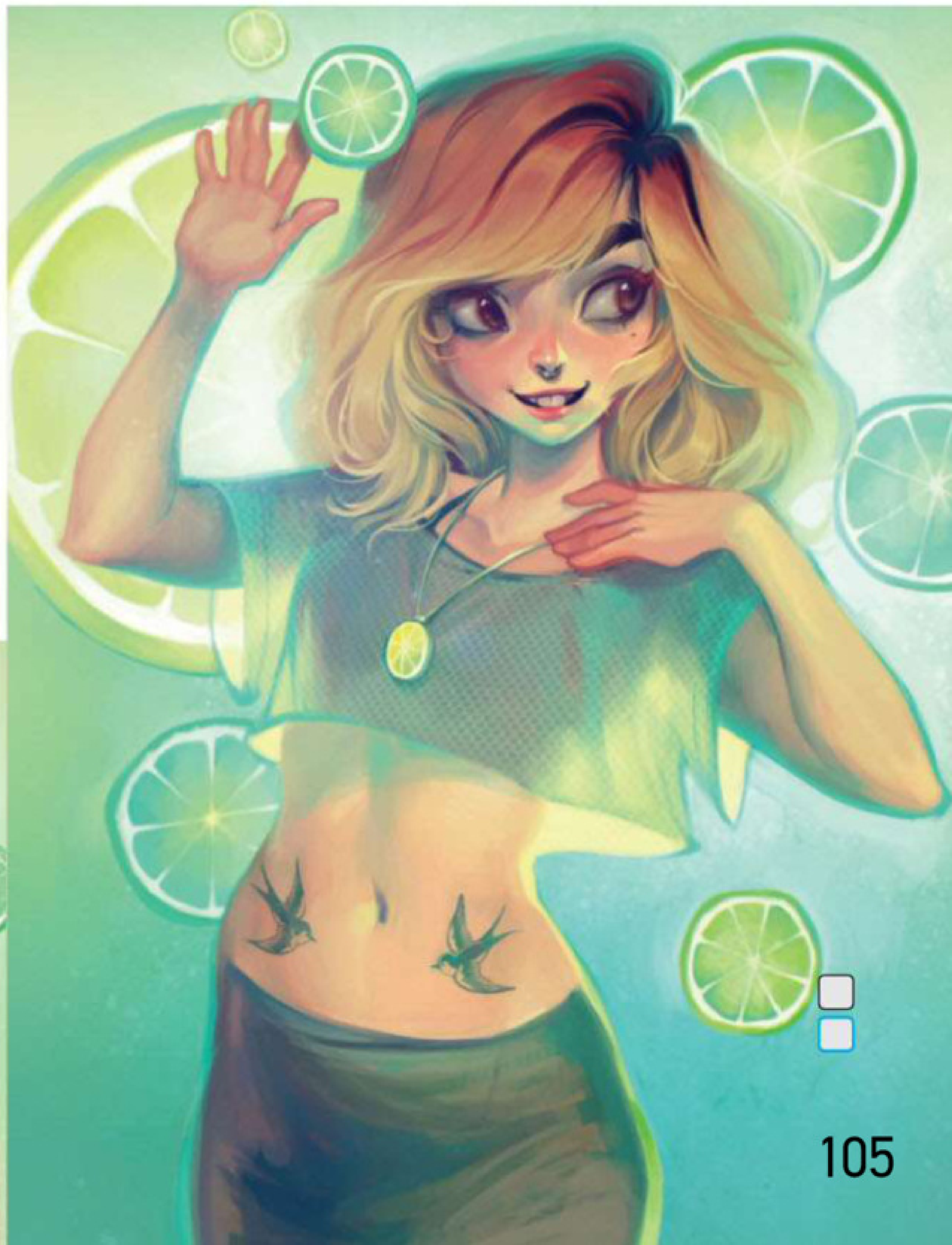
All images© Lois van Baarle



Glow: "I created this piece to play with the idea of light and warmth. I wanted it to appear as if these creatures are drawn to her warm, bright hair, and creating a happy, soft pile of blobs around her"

Lemonade: "For me, the process behind my digital paintings feels like second nature and therefore not special or interesting. However, every artist has a different process, and I love seeing how others create their art pieces. For this reason, I like sharing the process behind my work – I always notice that others find it more interesting than I expect them to!"





Photoshop creative EDITOR'S CHOICE

HARDWARE

Price £1,099.98 ($1,697 US approx) Web www.chillblast.com

Chillblast Fusion Photo OC Lite II

Achieve the ultimate PC setup and edit with more power than ever

The specs

Company Chillblast

Additional specs
Windows 10
16GB RAM
4GHZ Processor



CONNECTION PORTS
The Chillblast computer comes with four USB 3.0 ports, two USB 3.1 and two USB 2.0, along with a DVI port and an HDMI port.

Five potential upgrades Take the ultimate designing experience even further



CPU coolers

01 The fan is what keeps your computer cool, the processor from overheating and your designing time quiet. For just another £40/$60, you can invest in the Corsair Hydro Series H100 GTX, which has twice the cooling power than the H75 that comes as standard.



Motherboards

02 The standard Fusion Photo OC Lite II motherboard is overclocked, which means it's enhanced to give the machine more GHZ. For an extra £25/$38, you can upgrade to a Pro Gaming motherboard from Asus, which can handle bigger graphics.

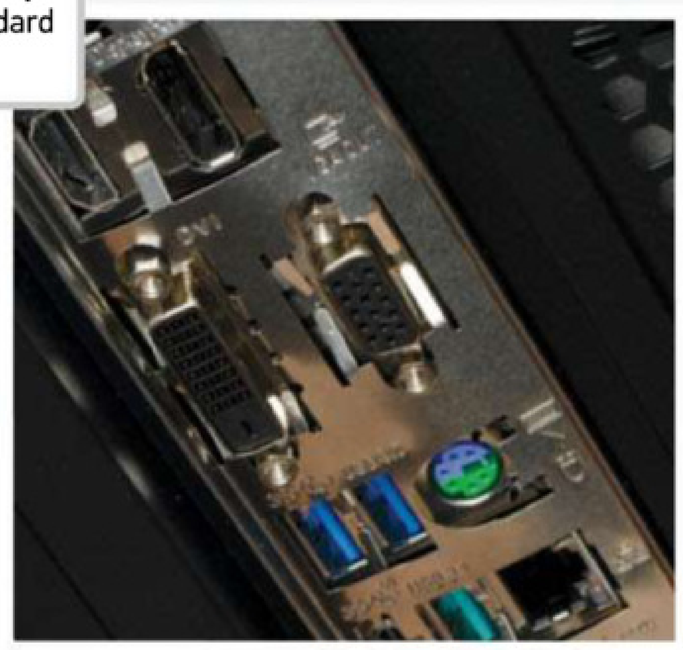


Memory

03 Double the memory on your computer from 16GB to 32GB with Corsair/Crucial memory sticks and improve the system performance. It will set you back £80/$120, but it's worth it when it improves your performance by 20 per cent.



CD DRIVE
The Chillblast Fusion Photo OC Lite II comes with CD, DVD and Blu-ray built in to the computer as standard for burning and ripping.





EXPANSION
The Chillblast unit has three 16x PCI Express Slots and three 1x PCI Express Slots for building on your workstation and upgrading it.

While many people simply choose to buy a computer based on price or processing power, purpose-built **desktop computers are fantastic if you specialise in a particular field.** Graphic designers, for example, can build computers with the specifications they need to keep their workflow quick, Photoshop powerful, and setup organised. This is exactly what Chillblast offers: it builds both laptops and desktop computers intended for designers, artists, or just anyone who wants to see Photoshop running to its highest possible capability.

The first impressions of the standard, Photoshop-ready Chillblast PC though are mixed. It's an extremely heavy, no-frills unit: it's matte-textured and black, and doesn't feel more state of the art than any other desktop unit you can purchase on the market. But while it lacks style, it feels solid and set for big projects; it comes with an Intel Core i7 6700K Skylake Processor, with over 4GHZ of power as the engine of the workspace. It really feels like the sky is the limit with your editing.

If you're serious about layers, for example, the Photo OC Lite II can certainly handle this extra processing, and saving PSB files takes significantly less time than on an average computer. Loading up the Camera Raw filter doesn't slow the computer down either, and if you use other Creative Cloud programs, such as InDesign or Lightroom, it can handle large files spread across multiple programs.

The processing heart of the Chillblast is perhaps the first thing a designer would look for in a computer, but the Chillblast feels like the complete editing workstation across the board. An Ultra Low Noise 600W PSU keeps the mighty engine almost silent, and a terabyte hard-disk is all the space you need for your pictures. The 1GB graphics card means that there's no limit on the monitor you can connect to the computer and the 16GB of RAM loads up even the most time-consuming elements of Photoshop in seconds.

It's easy to see the difference between an average PC and the Fusion Photo OC Lite II when using Photoshop. There's absolutely no lag in the slightest: projects with hundreds of layers are as easy to negotiate as destructive editing on one layer, and you'll notice when applying multiple filters or trying to paint a large picture that the Chillblast is reliable and smooth to operate.

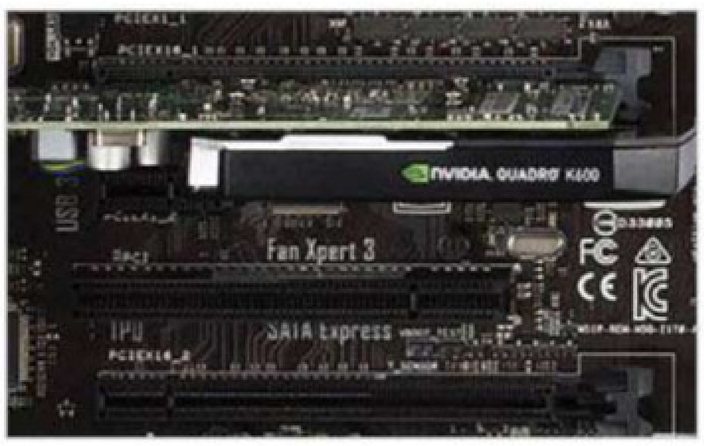
If you're multitasking, the Fusion Photo OC Lite II is more than capable; the workstation has high-definition audio and can write to Blu-ray too if you're interested in film-making as well as picture editing.

One of the best things about the Chillblast machine is that if there's any aspect of the tower that you think can be improved, Chillblast offers upgrades on its site. You can mix and match with whatever bits of kit you think will improve your computer, from cooling fans to added RAM.

It's hard to argue with Chillblast being the complete designer's workstation when you can upgrade almost every aspect of it to suit your needs. That's assuming that anything needs upgrading in the first place! The Fusion Photo OC Lite II has everything a Photoshop user needs in a computer.

The verdict

10 Pricey and a product only for the dedicated. For what you pay though, you really do get the best Photoshop experience possible.



Graphics cards

04 There are many graphics cards you can invest in to improve the overall display of your computer. The GeForce GTX 960 is £90/$136 and enhances Photoshop designing. Chillblast recommends the £99/$150 Quadro K600 Professional Video Card.



Hard drives

05 Picture files can be rather big, so hard drives should be spacious enough to store hundreds, if not thousands. The Seagate 1TBs come in at £30/$45 each, but you can double that space for £70/$106. You can pick four to integrate into your machine.

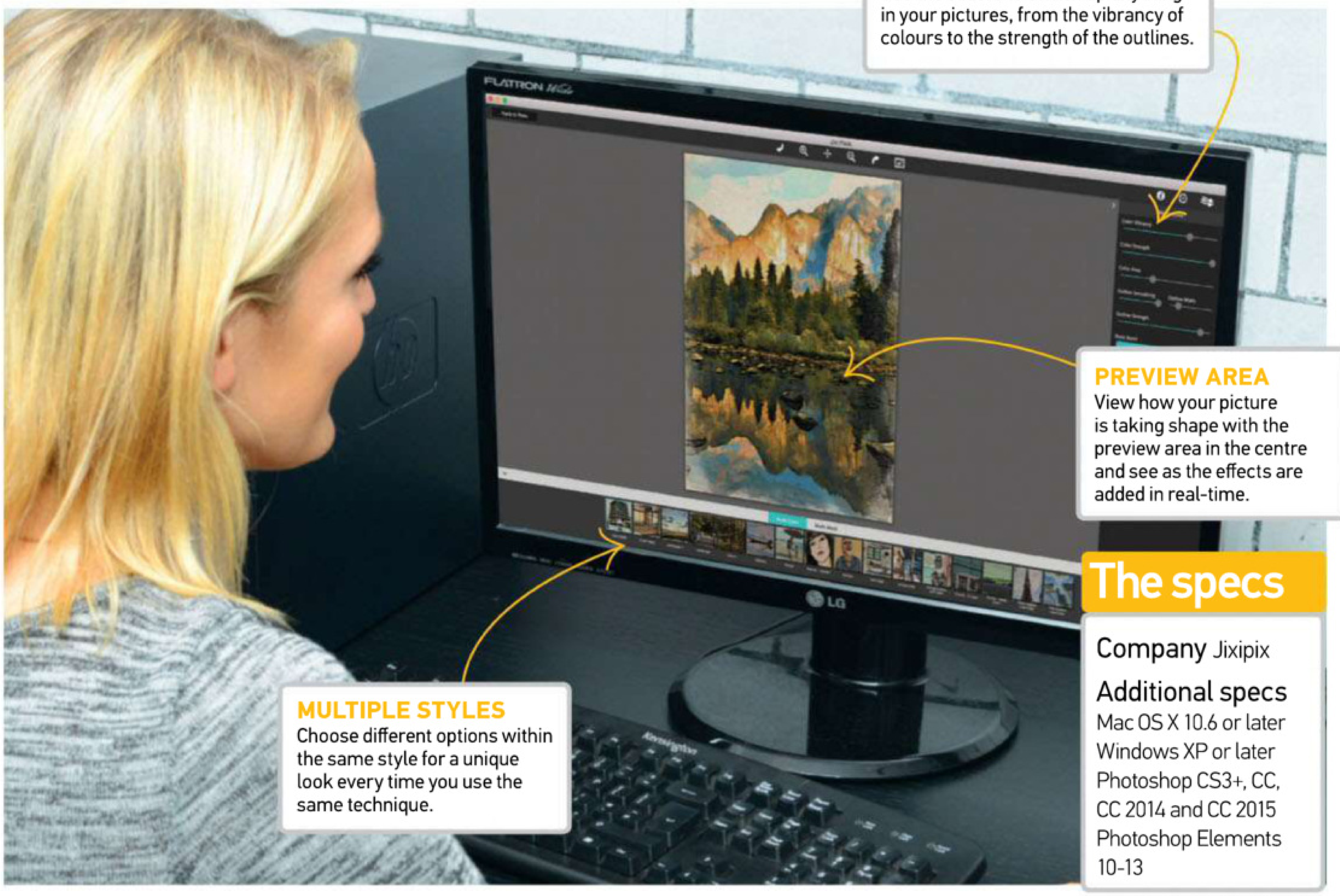
Standout feature

Intel Core i7 6700K Skylake Processor
The Chillblast processor is one of the most powerful desktop engines out there. Although originally designed for the gaming addicts, the i7 6700K Skylake can handle top-quality graphics, which makes it perfect for graphic design and art; it's also been enhanced to slightly more than 4GHZ to set it apart from others on the market.



SOFTWARE

Price £81.78 / $119.99 US Web wwwjixipix.com



The specs

Company Jixipix

Additional specs
Mac OS X 10.6 or later
Windows XP or later
Photoshop CS3+, CC, CC 2014 and CC 2015
Photoshop Elements 10-13

Jixipix Premium Pack

Transform your pictures into 18 different styles with Jixipix's ultimate artistic pack

To many Photoshop users, plug-ins are there as shortcuts for tricky editing or artistic styles. But despite how much you might rely on a plug-in, it's rarely the only effect you apply to your project. Jixipix's Premium Pack is one plug-in though that contains enough styles and effects that you may not need to use Photoshop for further edits. Jixipix is just one of a few companies that has developed a realistic, easy-to-use painting plug-in in the form of Artista Impresso Pro, a previous release that used a combination of presets and sliders to produce hundreds of unique digital paintings. The same principles have been applied to the Premium Pack, a collection of 18 apps, all capable of creating varying artistic and editing styles. But does it live up to the heights of Artista Impresso?

The first thing to note with the plug-in set is that three Artista styles are included: Haiku, Oil and Sketch. Oil creates fantastic results similar to Impresso; it has great canvas textures as well as a range of brush styles and strokes. Haiku doesn't hit the balance though, as watercolour blots look great, but forming a cohesive picture with them is a bit more of a struggle. Sketch is even more erratic; many of the options resemble the Plastic Wrap or Glowing Edges filter more than sketches.

This is true of a few Premium Pack styles, but on the whole, it's a hugely impressive, versatile and varied collection of effects. There are great styles available in the shape of Grungetastic and Portrait Painter, the former of which creates simple, cutout-style grunge posters and the latter makes cool digital paintings that you might want to work on further with the Mixer Brush. Snow Daze and Romantic Photo are great photo-editing tools, and effects like Moku Hanga, Artoon and Chalkspiration are fun to play with.

The Premium Pack is an extremely artistic plug-in. It's understandable that some of the styles are better than others, but the quality doesn't drop drastically across the set. Each one is useful in its own way and for the price, this is an investment for any Photoshop user looking to create a masterpiece with ease.

The verdict

8 A strong set of effects, there are probably more variations within the premium pack than you'll ever need. But they're all great fun to experiment with.

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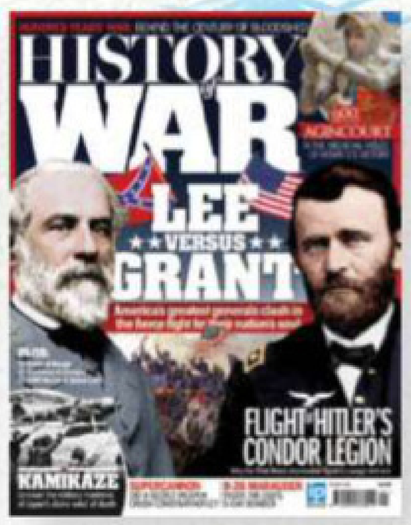
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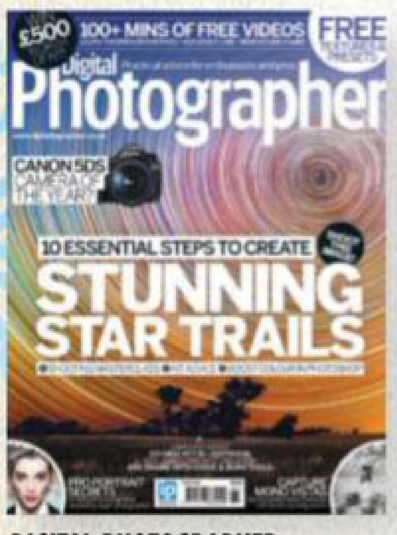
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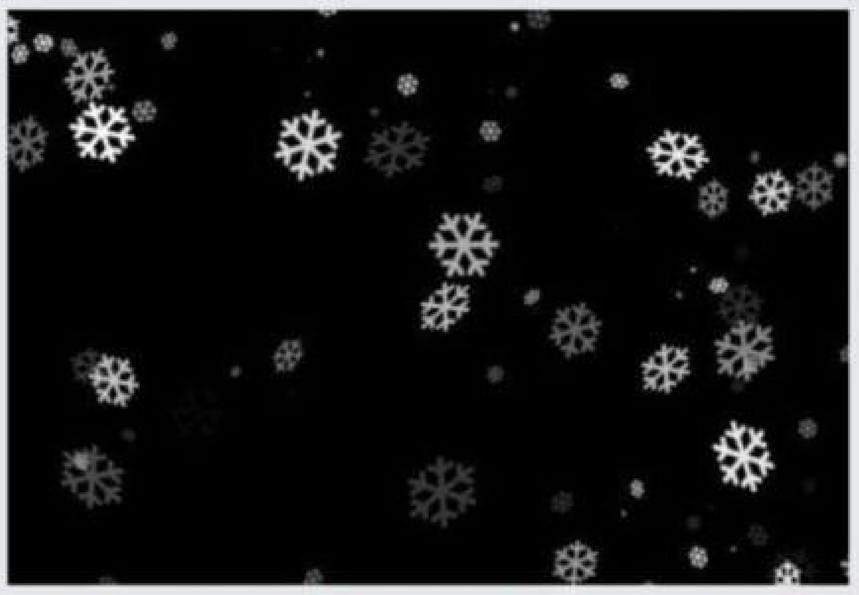
NAUTICAL DOODLES CREATIVE PACK

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- ✔ 2 fonts by FontFirma and Matt Ellis
- ✔ 1 Layrs Control 2 plug-in by Made by Vadim
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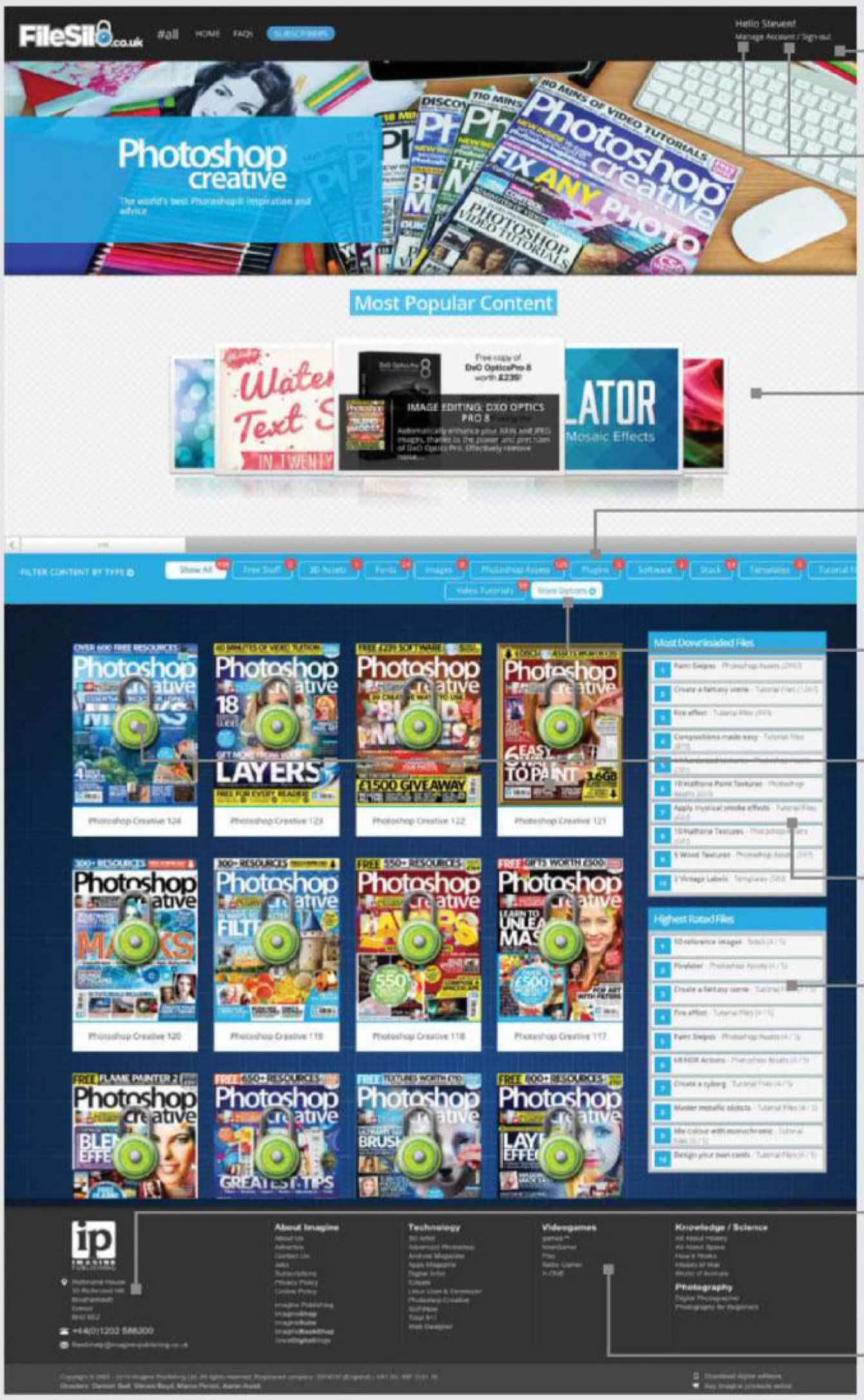
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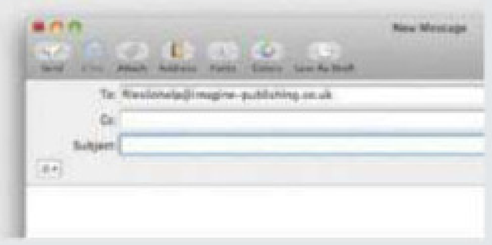
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Dream queen


The citadel


When I break down



Randy Monteith

We catch up with this Canadian artist and ask him how he creates surreal, visually intriguing compositions

My goal is always to create the kind of artwork I want to see," says Randy Monteith. Randy taught himself how to use Photoshop and has been using it for around 12 years. He's since created artwork for magazines and heavy metal bands. How does he achieve his unique style though? We put him on the spot to ask about his creative process.

How does your working process usually begin?

I have an image in my head and I start to build it in stages. Sometimes what I start out creating takes several turns and then comes out better than I initially imagined. Sometimes wanting to use a new technique is how I begin.

What tools and techniques do you love to use?

The Displace filter is one of my favourite tools. It's a great one for trying to wrap a texture around a subject. Layers are a very important part of creating with Photoshop. My advice for beginners is to take your time and learn about the different layers, one at a time.

What makes a perfect composition?

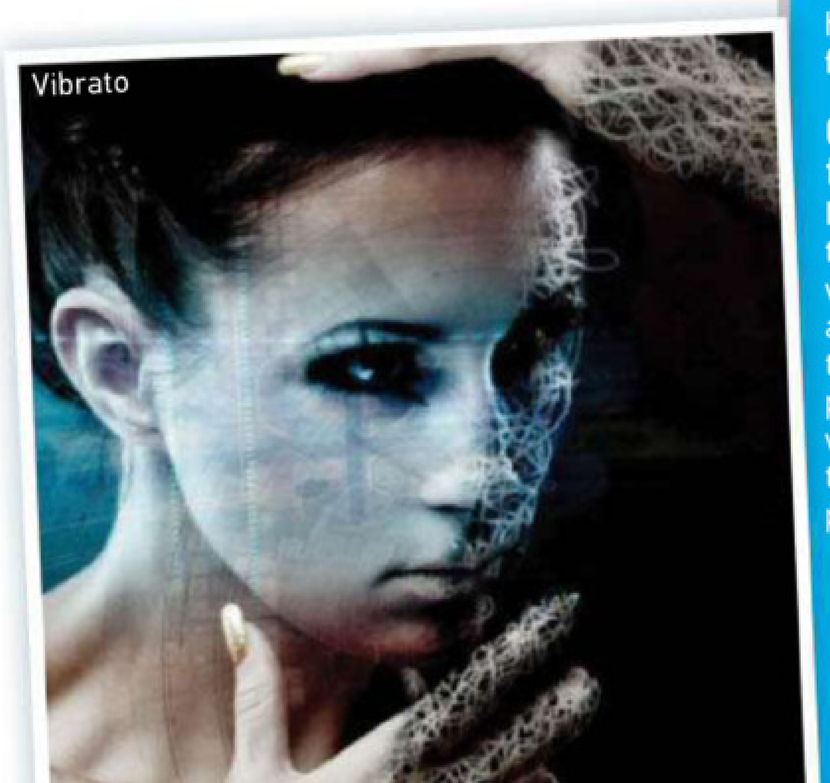
The final image is all that counts. When I've finished something, I ask myself: "Did I achieve what I set out to create?" If not, I will leave it alone and come back to it later. I like seeing originality in artwork, even if it's just taking old techniques to new levels.

What themes do you focus on in your work?

I just want to create the kind of artwork that makes people say: "Wow that's neat!" I enjoy creating beautiful artwork, but I love darker things as well; sometimes a technique influences a mood.

I'd like for people to come back and look at my artwork again and again.

To see more of Randy's art visit **www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/snowdog**


Vibrato

The making of The Citadel

See how Randy created this dark masterpiece with layers, brushing and a little 3D trickery

Creating the backdrop

To start, I added stars and nebulae to the sky. The blue tone was created with a Gradient Map adjustment layer and brushes were used to bring out the magical glow.



Adding the citadel

I rendered the spires of the citadel in a 3D program and saved them as a PNG, which I then imported into Photoshop. I then add a layer of fog with brushes.



Inserting the foreground

I added the subject, in this case Death, and the mound of skulls. I then used custom light brushes to create the magical highlights glowing from the blade.



Completing the shot

Next, I blended together the picture with adjustments and added these tiny creatures. This particular picture was designed with the intention of printing for a poster.



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